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61st year of publication

Progress and uncertainty in Afghanistan

Harry der Nederlanden

The Canadian mission in Afghanistan continues to be viewed with much skepticism in the country, not just by Liberals and New Democrats, but by Canadians in general. A scant 50 percent still support the effort. People are dubious about it not just because of the lives lost but because stories posted from Afghanistan continue to question whether large parts of the country can ever be assured of government protection against a determined and often brutal enemy. It looks as if the Karzai government in Kabul will need NATO troops to sustain it for a very long time to come.

However, Canadian soldiers who have served in Afghanistan generally seem to agree that they are doing worthwhile work in this very distant, very different country. Stationed in an area where the Taliban is most active, they see more action than most of the troops from the 36 other countries that have supplied troops to the coalition. The Germans and the Dutch, among others, have

elected to focus on reconstruction work, but they, too, have been forced to fight off Taliban attacks in recent weeks – or to see their reconstruction work destroyed. Recently a small contingent of Dutch troops fought off some 500 insurgents to defend a village where they had been working. Both countries have suffered casualties in recent weeks.

But the Canadians are by no means solely or even predominantly engaged in search and destroy missions. They too have been involved in improving roads, building schools, clinics and bridges, and in establishing better relations with Afghan villagers.

James Appathurai, a spokesman for NATO, writing in the *Globe and Mail* shortly after the assassination of six Canadian soldiers and their interpreter by a roadside bomb, stresses that the heart of the NATO mission is not killing radicals. "Billions of dollars are being spent on development projects," he writes, "on improving health care and education, on building a government that works for

Afghans. And it is paying off. Compared to six years ago, 10 times as many Afghans have access to health care. Six times as many are in school, more than 30 per cent of them female. And they have an elected parliament that robustly challenges the elected President."

He points out that without security, without the presence of NATO troops, all that good work can quickly be undone by the small militant minority supported by al Qaeda and other foreign fighters. Without the presence of foreign troops, there would be no point to the reconstruction efforts. It is impossible to separate peacekeeping from peacemaking in Afghanistan. And although the Afghan army is growing in size and competence, it is far from able to assume the task of providing security. Attempts to provide policing in small towns has not gone as well. The police tend to be poorly trained, poorly equipped, poorly paid and poorly motivated. Most tend to vanish when the insurgents attack – often with good reason, for they would be killed.

Graeme Smith (*Globe and Mail*), reporting from Kandahar, reports how costly it is for Canadian troops to try to provide support for the many small, far-flung police outposts in a country with very poor roads. Yet, one of the outposts between the mountains of Afghanistan may control access to an entire district. An apparently insignificant village may still have strategic importance. But the handful of police assigned to such outposts have little chance against groups of better armed Taliban. So the police have to rely heavily on



Raccoons on a Sunday walk

support from troops stationed in nearby cities, but such help can sometimes be several hours in arriving.

Moreover, rushing to defend such outposts exposes Canadian troops to the greatest dangers, for the Taliban know they are coming and the route they will follow. The Taliban seems to be using attacks on far-flung outposts to draw out NATO troops to where they are vulnerable to attack or to roadside bombs. Most Canadian deaths occur on missions like these.

In many cases neither the police nor the troops can provide adequate security. Don Martin of the *National Post* describes a small village of some 100 people in Kandahar province. Till recently it had a school and a medical center,

and the inhabitants were doing reasonably well growing poppies, melons and cucumbers. Then the Taliban came.

The police fled to save their lives. The doctor and the teacher left in haste, never to return, and most of the villagers followed. More internally displaced persons. One of the elderly villagers who had remained behind said that the Taliban had beheaded a ten-year-old boy who had given food to the policemen. When the father tried to intervene, he was hung.

Journalists keep relating such tragic stories. All these struggling Afghans living in scattered villages in a rugged landscape would like nothing better than peace. They would often simply like to be left alone because they

Afghan boy with donkey



News

Will Iran, Korea really back off nukes?

Some laud moves with the two nations. Others are suspicious.



Juche Tower (first picture) stands in Pyongyang as a reminder to the North Korean people of Kim Il-sung's philosophy of Juche (self-reliance). The second picture is the view from the tower and the last picture is a view from the Study Hall to the Juche Tower with thousands training on the Kim Il Sung Place for a torch march.

Howard LaFranchi

Washington — After years of setbacks to nonproliferation efforts involving North Korea and Iran, the news appears to be good: a reactor shuttered, inspectors readmitted, the brakes applied to uranium enrichment.

Or, as some critics of the diplomatic efforts contend, are the two nuclear scofflaws hoodwinking the international community with clever diversions while they pursue a goal of developing nuclear weapons?

North Korea last weekend shut down a nuclear power plant that provided fuel for its nuclear weapons program, while Iran has slowed its uranium enrichment program. Both countries have agreed to readmit international inspectors: North Korea to verify and monitor the disabling of its Yongbyon nuclear reactor, and Iran to monitor a heavy-water reactor that experts say could be used to develop weapons-grade plutonium.

Iran has also agreed, for example, to a set of new inspection safeguards for its nuclear fuel-enrichment plant in Natanz.

And six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear operations are set to resume Wednesday in Beijing.

But not everyone thinks that the nonproliferation developments signal progress. Some caution that what looks like promising compliance by North Korea and Iran could simply be a facade behind which the two countries advance toward entry into the club of nuclear countries.

The North Korea deal, which rewards Pyongyang with food and oil, marks the end of the Bush administration's tough, desist-or-else approach to what it considered rogue regimes with nuclear

ambitions, says John Bolton, the administration's former United Nations ambassador.

"This is North Korea succeeding with a tactical maneuver, something they've perfected over the last 50 years, but I still think they are never going to give up their nuclear capability because it is their trump card," he says. Now an expert in international institutions at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) in Washington, Mr. Bolton expects both regimes to interpret recent actions by the international community, including the US, as a green light to pursue their nuclear aims.

Prospect of denuclearization

But supporters of the North Korea deal in particular say it puts the international community back on a path — albeit a difficult one — leading to the Korean peninsula's denuclearization. It is not surprising, they add, that the Bush administration's regime-change advocates would condemn the accord with Pyongyang, since it suggests a return to pragmatic bargaining with adversaries.

"All the people who want to bomb Iran and believe we can cause a collapse of the North Korean regime have a vested interest in downplaying the significance of any negotiated solution," says Joseph Cirincione, a nonproliferation expert at the Center for American Progress in Washington.

"First we had Libya, and now North Korea is showing the efficacy of a policy that tries to change a regime's behavior, rather than trying to change a regime."

After years of diplomatic and economic isolation over his weapons programs and support

for extremist organizations, Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi gave up his programs for developing weapons of mass destruction in 2003. That decision resulted in full reestablishment of the country's ties to the international community, including with the United States. "We negotiated away a nuclear threat," says Mr. Cirincione, "and now Libya's nuclear program is in crates in Oak Ridge, Tenn."

Not so fast, say critics of agreements like the one with North Korea. They say Libya saw the writing on the wall with US action against the regime of Saddam Hussein and chose a different course.

In the case of North Korea, they add, the Yongbyon reactor was nearing the end of its useful life anyway, so Pyongyang gets fuel oil and food shipments for closing a relic. In that way, they say, the US and its partners in the six-party talks — China, South Korea, Japan, and Russia — are aiding in the longevity of a regime that starves its own people and threatens the North Pacific region with missile tests.

The key now, both proponents and opponents of a February deal with Pyongyang agree, will be the willingness of North Korean leader Kim Jong Il to disclose and open to inspection and the dismantling of all his nuclear facilities and materials, including an unverified number of nuclear bombs. No one expects anything other than the missed deadlines and dramatic about-faces that have typified the North's diplomatic approach in the past.

Advantage of today

But that does not minimize the clear advantage of a closed Yongbyon reactor today, supporters

say. Up until last weekend, the nuclear plant was operating while negotiations sputtered along.

"The fundamental flaw of the previous situation was that North Korea was operating a reactor that was producing plutonium while the six-party talks fiddled and dawdled," says Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association in Washington. "I'm not satisfied either, but the fact is that North Korea is no longer producing fissile materials," he adds. "And it makes a difference if you have material for six to nine weapons, or for 69."

As for Iran, Mr. Kimball says it is clear the Iranian government is trying to take steps that will stall movement toward a third UN Security Council resolution that presumably would entail even tougher international sanctions against Iran.

The key issue with Iran remains getting it to halt uranium enrichment, Kimball says, and for that he advocates what he acknowledges will be difficult negotiations. "Any agreement will have to have some kind of security assurances, something that gives Iran a clear vision of how [giving up uranium enrichment] can lead to better relations with the West," he says.

That approach has the advantage of tapping into Iranian public opinion. A new poll of Iranians conducted on behalf of Terror Free Tomorrow, a Washington organization favoring public engagement with populations susceptible to extremism, found that while a slight majority of Iranians favor their government developing a nuclear weapon, four of five Iranians favor opening up their country's nuclear

program to full inspections and to renouncing possession of nuclear weapons if it is accompanied by outside economic assistance and international trade, in particular with the US. That is all well and good, detractors say, but Iran is not really a democracy with a government that responds to public opinion. For critics of the current course, like the AEI's Bolton, the better option for a safer world would have been regime change, at least in the case of Iran, and an end to the Kim Jong Il regime.

Bolton says lost time and progress by both regimes in their nuclear programs make that option more difficult. But he says military action to take out Iran's nuclear sites, as difficult as that would be, still must be considered. "Admittedly, it's not an attractive option — until you look at the alternative, which is for Iran to possess nuclear weapons."

But Cirincione maintains that, as hard and unpredictable as negotiations with Pyongyang and Tehran may be, the prospects are better than under what he calls the nonproliferation-through-regime-change model. "We went to war with Iraq for the purpose of preventing an imminent nuclear threat. The path we're now on with North Korea won't be easy," he adds, "but it's a lot easier than Iraq."

Howard LaFranchi is a staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

News

Afghan village



Afghanistan continued from page 1

are not accustomed to getting anything from a central government anyway: the country has been too impoverished for that. Martin reports that the Canadian troops spent several days in the partly deserted village reinforcing the police post, but when they leave there's little assurance that the police won't flee again at the first sight of the enemy.

Because NATO troops have to provide support for such far-flung outposts, they often have to resort to air strikes and artillery. This has greatly increased the number of civilian deaths, fomenting charges that the coalition troops count Afghan lives cheap. In June, according to the *Times*, by some counts (and such counts are very inaccurate), more Afghan civilians had been killed by NATO troops this year than by the insurgents. Everyone, of course, is quick to bewail such statistics and to stress that this will surely turn public sentiment in Afghanistan against the foreign troops and the central government. Such deaths raise a much greater outcry than brutal murders committed by the Taliban or other radical groups. "You are supposed to be our protectors!" the affected villagers cry. "And instead you are killing us and our children." Given the choice, many speculate, most Afghans would opt for a little less freedom under the radicals rather than being trapped in an endless war in which they may be killed by either side.

NATO spokesmen are quick to point out that they do everything to avoid civilian casualties, and that while the Taliban kills civilians deliberately, coalition troops do so by accident while trying to protect them. The insurgents, knowing that such deaths create bad feelings over toward the foreigners, of course do everything they can to cause them — taking refuge in small villages and using the inhabitants as human shields. If Canadian troops know that civilians are present among the insurgents, they will avoid attacking. The rules of engagement are, thus, very unequal for the two sides.

The *Economist* editorializes that even though the NATO countries engaged in Afghanistan knew from the start that it was going to be a long haul, their determination is faltering. Disillusion is growing among the voters back home, and questions are being raised about their ability to stick with it.

The next contingent of Canadians to serve in Afghanistan is from Quebec. There has been a lot of opposition to Canadian participation among Quebecois from the start, and if their soldiers suffer a lot of casualties, that opposition is sure to increase.

P.M. Stephen Harper has promised to put the mission to a vote in parliament before extending its duration. The outcome of such a vote does not augur well for Iraq, which will need NATO defenders for many more years.



Afghan trainees

Doubting sphere sovereignty

Rob Joustra

I butted heads with a professor early on in my undergraduate days. It was a course in macroeconomics, and the professor suggested, and I think still does to the best of my knowledge, that sphere sovereignty had very little concrete to offer us for the study of economy. My objection was quite immediate. He paused, looked at me and said, "You political science types just know all the answers."

I was deflated at the time by what I perceived was a kind of sarcastic disapproval of my bravado, but now I think he was making a different point.

The overarching principle of sphere sovereignty is that God has created the world and its structures of authority. Those institutions and organs have their authority and legitimacy granted directly from God, so that, for example, there is no case in which total authority could be vested in any single organ, such as either the church or the state.

As a basic principle I believe it to be quite sound. Authority is plural, and this confession serves as a good check against the kind of absolutism that has vexed political cultures in the past.

But there are good reasons to contest sphere sovereignty. Some question the term itself as giving rise to misunderstanding. It gives the impression that each sphere of the created world is somehow hermetically sealed away from the other — sovereignty implies exclusivity of authority. So some thinkers have suggested terms like "differentiated responsibility" or "plurality of authority" to get at what we really mean. These are certainly improvements, but I don't think they answer my economics professor's criticism.

Think about the state, a favorite obsession of political types. Sphere sovereignty tells us that God has ordained the state, or at least that is how we interpret Jesus' command to "render unto Caesar" (as well as others). But actually if we derive a direct kind of God-ordained legitimacy for the 21st century state from this passage, we need to be careful we don't depart a bit too far from context. Could rendering unto Caesar be Jesus' implicit endorsement of Empire? Or if we read it with some contextual lenses, does it mean merely that God appoints the power of government? But what shape does that government take, and why should it be this shape instead of that one?

Increasingly phenomenon like globalization and more cosmopolitan movements coming out of the global refugee crisis are questioning why we need

to accept such a naturalized version of statehood. In fact, there is no such clear and incontestable God-ordained version of statehood or (inter)national development.

The current international system is usually agreed to have been forged in the Westphalian consensus of 1648, out of the ashes of a devastating religious war on the European continent. And far from naturalized, this state has evolved and changed so much over time that it is hard to even use the term "state" for what we have today. Notre Dame professor Daniel Philpott writes that "revolutions in sovereignty" are changing the way that states are organized and understood. It is even possible that critical global relations may soon not be so state-centric. Already we see major corporations like Microsoft capable of dictating terms to states, effectively penetrating the "sovereignty" or traditional spheres of authority of states.

Is this a violation of sphere sovereignty? Should we tell Microsoft God is displeased with their alternative interpretation of how authority may function in a global world? I think my old economics professor might argue that we are assuming too much of a divine mantle and not enough of a political one if we did that. If we insist that God hath ordained the spheres of authority as such, and that the state just *does this*, and can only be responsible for that, we are in danger of "knowing everything", and abrogating a fundamental civil obligation to politics, deliberation and conversation.

We may certainly maintain that we believe authority should be organized in a certain way, but such ill-fated omniscience is not rooted in a critical sphere sovereignty, but in an over-confident and singular political theology. History has shown us that social institutions and the expressions of authority are fluid; they change. It is this kind of change, a new imagination for global politics that will be critical for addressing the challenges of terrorism, environmental degradation, refugeeism, AIDS epidemics and more.

In the face of these things we must expand our moral and political horizons and contest such naturalized organizations of state, corporation, education and more so that we, Christians and not, can imagine and revision better ways to care for and cultivate the gifts of God in this, his good creation.

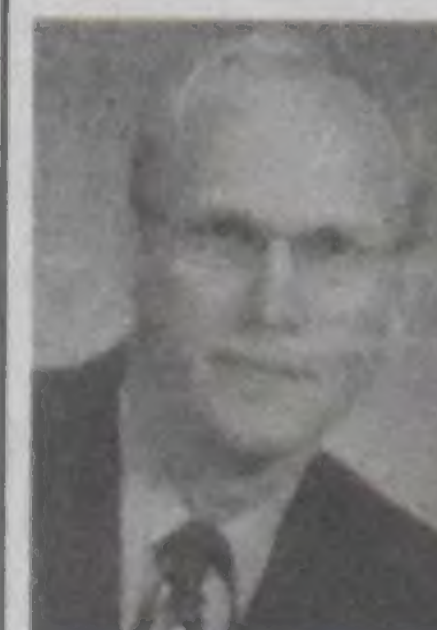
Rob Joustra, a researcher for the Work Research Foundation, agreed to take over David Koyzis' column for the summer.



Principalities & Powers

David T. Koyzis

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Editorial

On our medical system, advocacy, and bluebutt

Harry der Nederlanden

Waiting to see doctors or to receive treatment can spur a lot of reflection on our health care system. When friends in the U.S. hear that three months after being diagnosed with cancer I still don't even have an oncologist, they nearly become apoplectic. "Outrageous!" they holler. "How can you tolerate it?" Their apoplexy quickly becomes infused with patriotic steam about the superiority of the American system. "I was getting chemotherapy within a month!"

Even fellow Canadians, however, can become rather agitated and emphatic. In fact, my unease about my situation arose in large part because, when people asked me how my treatments were going, I'd have to admit that they weren't yet – that in fact I didn't even have a doctor yet. "What?!" they'd exclaim. "What are you doing about it? You have to become your own best advocate, you know."

Their urgency communicated itself to me. Until then I'd been feeling pretty relaxed about it. After all, the pain was only sporadic; I still have the energy to do my work; and most of the time I don't think about the tumors inside me at all. It all seems a bit unreal. Besides, I know that when the chemotherapy starts, I'll probably feel a lot worse than I do now.

But, although my regular doctor assured me that time is not that terribly crucial, since those tumors have probably been there quite a while already, I too began to feel the urgency and to grow impatient. I actually liked my earlier attitude better, but once the urgency bug bites you, he sometimes keeps you awake at night. Like many of my friendly advisors, I too have heard those experts on television say that nowadays you have to become your own advocate.

"You have to put on some pressure," one of my friends urged me. "Do a little hollering. The squeaky wheel gets the grease."

So I thought about where to apply pressure and whom to holler at. At my family doctor? The poor fellow had blushed and stammered when he had to tell me that my cancer had reappeared on my lung. Besides, chances were pretty slim that his receptionist would put me through to him. Whenever I call him, she tries to give me an appointment at least six weeks in the future. She's clearly

the protective kind, determined to save her employer from undue pressure.

What about the surgeon to whom I was referred? After reading my cat scan, he'd concluded that surgery was out and had told his receptionist to call the oncologists. At my next visit, he'd acted startled when I told him no one had yet contacted me, and he had immediately told the receptionist to contact the oncologists again. By now she had already called them three times, and she is a very kind, motherly sort. I couldn't possibly holler at her.

Clearly, I should be hollering at oncologists somewhere. But they were, as yet, an anonymous bunch. Perhaps unjustly, I envisioned them as on vacation or at one of those infamous conferences in Las Vegas. Or they might be canoeing in northern Ontario. Or – slap my face – they may be working furiously in our local hospital to catch up with a huge backlog of patients.

Advocacy is a nice word. Neat, clinical, legal sounding. But it's not. It's probably about hollering and elbowing your way to the front of the line. I'm not sure about the ethics of shouting, "I'm number one!" In fact, I'm not even sure it's always effective.

Frustration and impatience don't always lead to wise actions. Our closet door is a good example. Things often have a way of tumbling out of our hall closet or of refusing to fit in properly. So after you've tried unsuccessfully to close the door a couple of times using finesse, you resort to force. You give whatever has been defying your will a quick judo chop and then you swiftly, violently slam the door on it.

That's why our closet door is currently lounging on its side in the middle of the hall. The hinges popped loose. I spoke to the Lord about it. When someone is suffering from cancer, I suggested, it would be really, really nice if the little things would go smoothly. First the water heater starts leaking, then I can't get online, and now the closet door pops off. What next? Cancer sufferers should be spared such blows.

But I have examples drawn directly from the medical sphere that will make you think twice about any overly aggressive advocacy or about irritating the people into whose hands you are about to commit your very life.

For my first chemo treatments six years ago, the nurses had to insert what is known as a pic line. I know, I don't like the name either. It reminds me of a sharp instrument, but it's probably named after its inventor – Mr. Pic, or perhaps even Mr. Pickwick. It's a thin plastic tube that is inserted in your arm and winds its way to the middle of your chest, which is where they want the chemo to enter. When it was time for my pic line, an Italian fellow in the bed beside me who was getting the same thing done was wailing at the top of his lungs. And the two nurses that were helping me were doubled up with suppressed laughter. "Oooh, poor Guido," they'd whisper to each other. Apparently Guido's mother and two sisters were there to comfort him.

So I was determined to be manly. The first pic line ended up on the floor. Whoops, too much giggling. The next one slid in alright and, frankly, I didn't feel a thing. But then the nurses discovered that the line had traveled upward and made a u-turn and traveled back downward. "You have weird veins," said one nurse.

Feeling very manly at not having wailed even a little, I began to tease her that perhaps her knowledge of human anatomy was at fault.

At last a third pic line was inserted, the little chemo pump attached, and I was sent home. A day or so later, I

turned off my chemo pump because I was suffering from blinding headaches. Every time I turned off the pump, they went away. It turned out the pic line, instead of going to the middle of my chest, ended up near the base of my brain. Oooh, poor Harry!

The nurse apologized and quickly corrected the situation, but I still suspect that it was an act of vengeance.

Example number two – and I only give this example because the page isn't filled yet. During my first radiation treatment at a hospital in Hamilton, which I will not name to avoid antagonizing the troops, the technician said, "You have a long body. We need you to move higher up. Just grab hold of the end of the table and pull yourself up."

I was lying on a smooth metal table with a sheet under me and another covering my posterior. As I grabbed the end of the table to scoot forward, the technician also put the table itself into forward motion. No, I didn't slide off the end of the table. The huge monstrous radiation machine was there. And – Bang! – my aching fingers were trapped between the steel table and the steel machine. Oooh, poor Harry!

I didn't lose any appendages, but I did have three black fingernails. The nursing staff was very solicitous, but I admit I couldn't resist ribbing the technicians every time I came in about their torture chamber. "Do you people get paid under the table to generate more business for the crushed fingers department?" "Maybe you could try tilting the table to see whether I slide off."

But they, too, had their revenge. One day everything was set for another radiation treatment: I was on the table, the sheet was removed from my posterior to expose me to the microwave machine. The table began to move upward – and then stuttered a little, stopped. And then moved upward, ever upward.

"Hang on! Don't move!" they shouted from far below. "The table is stuck. We can't get it to come down."

I cautiously peered over the edge upon the foreshortened figures below. "No, don't try to get off," they cried waving frantically. "You'll hurt yourself. Wait, we've called a technician."

I was at the mercy of an electrician. How long till he arrived?

It wasn't long before I discovered that directly above the table on which I was trapped, there was a large air conditioning vent. It was blowing down full force right on my exposed behind.

"If you don't hurry," I warned, "you'll have to put me in the microwave just to defrost me."

I could feel the nubbles turning into goosepimples. And what follows goosepimples, I wondered. Bluebutt – that's what.

"Couldn't you at least turn off the air c-c-conditioner p-p-please?"

"Sorry, the machine needs it." Yes, here it was machine over man.

They did eventually lower me back down to earth. But I learned my lesson. You don't want to antagonize medical staff, not even a little.

Let even your self-advocacy be tempered with grace, for grace will make the whole system run much more smoothly.

Meanwhile, I'm in pursuit of an oncologist in another city. Watch my elbows.

I still have things to do. Miles to go before I sleep. Editorials to write and a closet door to fix....

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Book review

Islamism and the Lebanese civil war

Because They Hate: A Survivor of Islamic Terror Warns America

By Brigitte Gabriel
St. Martin's Press, 2006,
258 pp. \$31.95.



It's hard to imagine we have been living like this for three years. It's now 1978. But time doesn't really matter or mean much anymore. There is no reason to keep up with time or days or holidays. There is no change; there are no events to look forward to: no time to have to be in school, no time to be at a doctor's appointment, no time to be at a social event. About the only thing time can tell us is when the shelling will begin, and it might be our time to die. (p. 53)

Reviewed by Harry Antonides

Brigitte Gabriel, born in Lebanon in 1965, tells a story that is not just about the traumatic experiences of a family that faced the terrors of war with courage and hope, but one that contains a message with worldwide implications.

This is a gripping account of the civil war that changed Lebanon from a peaceful and prosperous country to one torn apart by civil war and terrorists attacks that have left most of its physical and social infrastructure in ruins. The author's purpose in writing this book is to alert a smug and willfully blind West that unless it honestly faces its fanatical enemies, it will suffer the same fate as Lebanon.

Brigitte was the only child of two loving parents, who came from a long line of Maronite Christians. She experienced the first ten years of her life in a small Christian town called Marjayoun, close to the border with Israel, as charmed and privileged. At age four she began attending a private Roman Catholic school where she learned to read and write in Arabic and French.

Gabriel provides a helpful overview of the millennia-long history of Christianity in her country. Though part of the larger Arabic world, she describes pre-war Lebanon as "an island of freedom in the middle of an Islamic sea of tyranny and oppression." It was the only country in the Middle East where Christian holidays, such as Christmas and Easter were openly celebrated as they are in Europe and America.

When Lebanon gained its independence from France in 1941, the population was roughly 55 per cent Christian and 45 per cent Muslim. Two years later the Lebanese National Pact created an arrangement that provided for power sharing among the various religious communities. At first that led to a peaceful coexistence and cooperation that is unique in the Arab world.

From peace to war

But over time, ancient hatreds and

rivalries drifted to the surface again. Chief among them was the Muslim hatred toward Jews and Christians. The demographic changes shifted in favour of the Muslim population due to the influx of Palestinian refugees. Most important, after the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was expelled from Jordan in 1970, many Palestinians resettled in Lebanon.

Gabriel explains that this influx of new arrivals tipped the scale toward civil war in Lebanon. The new Muslim majority, now supported by the Soviet Union and other Muslim countries, felt empowered by the presence of the PLO and Yasser Arafat.

The PLO used its position of power to begin its attacks on Israel and on the Christians within Lebanon. All-out civil war began in April 1975, when Palestinian gunmen opened fire on worshipers outside a Maronite church in Beirut. Gabriel writes: "Lebanon's descent into hell had begun." In all, she reports that one hundred thousand civilians were killed.

On a cold and windy night in 1975, after the family had gone to bed, the carefree childhood of the author came crashing down with rockets raining on the house, leaving it in ruins. Miraculously, she and her parents survived, although she suffered serious wounds that required surgery and hospitalization.

Then followed seven years of barely surviving in a small underground bomb shelter near the ruins of their once beautiful house and her father's restaurant. Once a rocket landed close to their shelter piling up earth and concrete and blocking their exit. They were trapped, for no matter how hard they tried, they were not able to remove the debris that blocked their escape. After three days of shouting for help, they gave up hope and were prepared to die. But then members of the Lebanese army heard their screams and freed them.

Gabriel describes in heartbreaking details their "life under terror" as Islamic terrorists began killing thousands of Christians and making their lives impossible. The small Gabriel family barely survived the frequent shellings. After the South Lebanese Army pushed the Muslim fighters farther north away from their village, their lives assumed some form of normalcy, though the clouds of war never disappeared.

The so-called Six Parties Agreement of October 1976, supposedly ushering in the end of the civil war in Lebanon, did no such thing. The killings in Lebanon and attacks on Israel by the PLO continued. In March 1978, Israel launched its incursion into southern Lebanon. Four years later, the Israeli army began its operation Peace for Galilee, pushing PLO and other Muslim forces toward Beirut.

A life-changing experience

This move by Israel provided a breathing spell for the Christians living

near the southern border with Israel. But not before Gabriel's family was nearly killed by incoming 155 millimeter shells that exploded in their backyard, seriously wounding her mother. Gabriel managed to get her mother to the local hospital, where the Israeli doctors decided to send her to a hospital in Israel for further medical care.

The kindness and full attention her mother received at the hands of the Israeli medical staff amazed her, and it forced her to realize that the anti-Israel propaganda that had surrounded her was utterly false. She noticed that the Israeli doctors made no distinction between their own people and all others, including Muslims. She was filled with gratitude and called this encounter with the first Jewish people she had ever met a "life-changing experience."

She was shocked that one Muslim woman, who had received the medical care she needed and had stayed for twelve days in the hospital, still hated all Jews. After the attending doctor had left the room, she said with an "evil, hate-filled look" on her face: "I hate you all. I wish you were all dead." Gabriel continues:

And for the first time in my life I saw evil, I realized that this Muslim couldn't love the Jews even after they had saved her life. And when you are unable to be grateful to the people who saved your life, you have no soul. When humans become devoid of compassion, a sense of forgiveness, and open-mindedness, when they surrender their humanity to hate, they become an evil force of darkness that is irreconcilable with hope, love, and peace.

Gabriel realized that there was no future for her in the country of her birth. But in order to escape what she describes as "the seemingly endless hell of Lebanon" she had to concentrate on her studies, especially English. She took on volunteer work and completed a business administration course, eventually obtaining a job with the Israeli military and then as an administrative secretary in the local hospital, working for Israeli and Arab doctors.

In 1984, her contacts there led to a position with Middle East Television as Arab speaking news anchor. Here she had an opportunity to take a close look at the fundamental difference between the Arab and Western cultures, which convinced her that there exists indeed a clash of civilization. (That chapter alone is worth the price of the book.)

The wrong signals

What Gabriel finds most disturbing about this clash is that the West fails to understand what is at stake. She is convinced that the greatest danger we face is not in the power of radical Islam but in the failure of the West to adequately assess and defend itself against a determined enemy bent on establishing a worldwide Islamic rule. She cites case upon case in which the West, including America, gave the wrong signals. Here is a case in point:

When Iran's vicious puppet Hezbollah blew up the marines in Lebanon in 1983, America turned tail and ran, leaving the Christians to be slaughtered in town after town. It sent a strong, loud, and clear message to the Muslim radicals of the world, including Osama bin Laden: America is no longer the power it used to be.... As a result of the humiliation of America and the conquest of Lebanon, the flames of jihad now rage all over the world.

The truth of Gabriel's assessment of Western naivete hits home when we realize that even the most dangerous Islamic networks, including Hamas, al Qaeda and Islamic Jihad, have their supporters and tentacles right in America. She cites names and instances where theirs ties were revealed and people were found guilty of aiding the enemy. Further, a number of well-known Islamic organizations, in the U.S. pose as pro-American, but in reality they are enablers of the jihadists. One such prominent organization is the Council on

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Story

The true-to-life account of the discovery and the gradual flowering of a not-so-famous organist

Ray Hulstein

I am not sure that I can tell you what the exact date was when my fascination with the organ began. It must have been at the beginning of the Second World War. My Dad came home with an old organ, a so-called Harmonium or Pedal Organ. I believe that he got it from a client in lieu of payment for furniture sold. It came in a fine looking oak cabinet, but although the instrument was in a good condition some work needed to be done. Some of the reeds needed cleaning and the binding that connected the pedal to the windbag needed repairs. But there was lots of binding in Dad's workshop. And after some further cleaning of the inside, it was ready to play.

I am drafted

Unfortunately none of us knew how to play, so Opa IJzerman, my maternal grandfather, offered to teach me the difference between the big white keys and the smaller black keys above the white. After Opa explained the different scales, he let me play. My first music lesson had begun, and I played a whole scale, c-d-e-f-g-a-b-c. That was it! I knew how to play the organ!

However, gradually I discovered that Opa could only play in a few scales. When it came to playing a hymn with three flats or with three or more sharps, he would quickly turn the page to another hymn, usually one that was written in C.

During one of our lessons, I asked Opa to play some song for me that I knew was beyond his skill. Of course, this was a dirty trick. But I was astonished to hear him play it perfectly. Then I watched his fingers and

noticed that he was playing the song from memory and in the scale of C. After a lot of practice at home, I was capable of playing some of the easier hymns, and I learned to play well-known songs by ear. We had some enjoyable sing-alongs with my sister Hannie, Reini and brother Henk. All three had excellent voices.

Mr. Knipscheer and the organic razzberry

Soon my Mother began to see me as a world-famous organist, and she sent me to our church organist, Mr. Knipscheer, for more and better lessons. As my skills grew, I often was kept home when my parents had visitors because Mother wanted to show off how good Reijer played the old Harmonium. However, my mother's vision was not shared by Mr. Knipscheer. Had he known the frustrations awaiting him, he would surely have crossed off my name from his Student List. It did not take very long for both of us, student and teacher, to become frustrated, and my future as a famous organist grew dimmer with each lesson.

I take most of the blame, as I always wanted to play rather than study dead and boring instructional stuff. But Mr. Knipscheer was a very grumpy man; he was often in a bad and over-bearing mood. Our relationship came to a sudden end during a worship service in our church. Mr. Knipscheer sometimes invited his students to sit with him at the organ site, way up high at the organ bench. One Sunday it was my turn to be there to observe his playing, watching his hands and his feet.

As I was standing beside him with my back to a large panel with several different holes, some small, some big, watching the feet of Mr. Knipscheer traveling across large wooden slats of the footpedals, I noticed air sucking through the large holes behind me. I

put my hand over one of the larger holes, knowing it to be one of the louder pedal basses, and I watched until his foot reached the base pedal. When the moment came, the congregation heard a terrible sound – like a huge fart.

Mr. Knipscheer looked at my innocent face, and his face turned from white to purple. But I give him credit: he was a good organist and he continued to the end of the hymn. When the song was finished, however, so was my stay in the organ loft. Sliding off the organ bench, he opened the door, and invited me to pass through. I never passed through that door again, nor through the door of his music studio.

End of organ lesson No. 2.

Thrilling Mrs. Villiers

Several years later, in 1951, I emigrated

a country that falls prey to Islam-driven fanaticism.

Gabriel, who immigrated to the U.S. in 1989, is able to see more clearly than many in the West, that the West has to a large extent become the prisoner of its own fantasies and imagined invulnerability. In the meantime there are destructive forces at work that, if not understood and withstood in time, will do to us what happened to Lebanon.

I believe that she is correct in seeing that, as she puts it, America and Israel are in the bull's eye of the current clash between Western civilization and radical Islam. Many are confused about the reality of this conflict – a confusion that is cleverly exploited by those who are absolutely convinced that they are Allah's instrument to spread the rule of Islam over the entire world.

The author of *Because They Hate* helps us to cut through this confusion by telling the story of her family's experience. She writes this book as a warning to America, and therefore to all who treasure freedom. For that she deserves our grateful attention.

Harry Antonides
hantonides@sympatico.ca



to New-Zealand. I was engaged to Mies Dussuljee, and we decided to immigrate together, but we did not plan to get married right away. For the first few months, I shared a room with another Dutch immigrant, Chris Van Der Oest, in the house of an old lady, Miss Villiers. She was a member of the Baptist Church, very pious and constantly trying to convert us to the one and only true Church on earth, the local Baptist Church.

Soon I heard that the local Anglican Church had an organ for sale. A two-manual organ with an electric motor. I went to see it and the price was unbelievable. Only five pounds! I quickly grabbed it, and they agreed to store it until I first spoke to Miss Villiers to ask for permission to have this rather large instrument in our room, a combination living and bedroom.

Miss Villiers was thrilled by the idea of an organ in her home. Any Christian home would be honored to have such an instrument to sing to the Glory of the Lord. I made arrangements for delivery with my employer's truck driver, Bill, a kind-hearted but often foul-mouthed man. On the day of delivery, Miss Villiers, all excited, opened the door. Seeing the rough-looking Bill, she saw an opportunity to engage in evangelism. As we struggled to get the organ through the door into our room, she asked Bill, "Mister, do you like music?"

Bill answered, "I sure do Ma'am!"

Pounced on the moment, Miss Villiers said, "But, Sir, music should not be the main thing in your life."

"Off course not, Ma'am," Bill eagerly replied: "The main thing is money and loads of it!"

Poor Miss Villiers looked horrified and fled from this heathen to disappear into her living room.

I did feel sorry for her, although often misguided, the poor soul meant well. And she never complained about the mess I made in my room while I worked on my very own two-manual organ. I dismantled, cleaned and re-installed the parts, cleaned

See *Organist* on page 16

Islamism cont. from p. 5

American-Islamic Relations (CAIR). A great deal of Saudi Arabian money is devoted to building American mosques where radical imams continue to preach a message of hate towards America.

The 9/11 attack came as a cruel shock to America. What was even more incomprehensible to Americans was the jubilation and dancing in the Arab streets. Americans were dumbstruck with such rejoicing over the death of three thousand innocent men women and children. Why do they hate us so? was the question many asked. Gabriel's answer is short: because they hate us and our way of life and everything about us. She continues:

They hate our freedom. They hate our democracy. They hate the practice of every religion but their own. They don't just disagree. They hate. Not just Judaism. Not just Christianity. In various parts of the world today, Islamists are also waging terror war against Hindus, Buddhists, and all other "infidels." The imposition of Islam upon the entire world is not merely their goal. It is their religious duty. They are following the word of their holy book, the Koran, which is

the guide to hatred of infidels, waging war, and victory through slaughter.

Fifth Columnists at work

Gabriel devotes a chapter to the influence of Islam in American universities and colleges, facilitated by millions of Arab dollars. She reports that the Saudi royal family alone has spent close to 70 billion dollars worldwide to spread the Wahhabist branch of Islam. America universities have been the grateful beneficiaries of this largess, heedless of the fact that this money has been used to further the cause of radical Islam.

The result is that at many campuses in America, Muslim student organizations and pro-Islam professors and administrators have succeeded in creating a climate rife with anti-American and anti-Israel fanaticism. Gabriel has often met with hostile opposition to her pro-American, pro-Israel and anti-radical Islamist speeches. She has received death threats and been barred from certain speaking events for her unapologetic defence of freedom of religion and speech.

What makes this book special is that the author speaks from bitter, even heartbreaking experience. She knows what can happen to

Stewardship

New wheels keep Toronto thrift shop dolly on the go



MCC PHOTO: JOANIE PETERS

A four-wheel dolly provided by the Global Closet Thrift Shop makes it possible for Dave Peart to buy furniture at the MCC thrift shop without having to incur additional costs for transportation.

Gladys Terichow

TORONTO, Ont. — A large 'not for sale' sign is posted on a four-wheel dolly in the Global Closet Thrift Shop in East Toronto's Flemingdon Park.

Customers use the dolly about 10 to 20 times a week to move furniture and other large purchases to their homes from the MCC thrift shop.

"We've had it 18 months — the wheels have been repaired twice and we've fixed lots of flat tires," explained Don, a volunteer who works in the store three days a week.

Each return trip is at least one kilometre, he said, estimating the dolly has been pushed more than 1,000 kilometres along streets and sidewalks in this high-density multicultural neighbourhood of 27,000 people.

The majority of people living within a 10-block radius of the shop are newcomers to Canada who live in high-rise apartments and do not own vehicles, explained shop manager Shirley Sherk.

"Sometimes we are their first stop," she said, explaining many people in the community are refugees struggling to provide the bare necessities for themselves and their families. "We try to make this a friendly place where they feel welcome. Many people tell us this place feels like a little oasis of peace for them."

The Global Closet Thrift Shop opened in 2003 to provide affordable clothing and household items. Furniture was added a year later. The demand for furniture resulted in the store designating 50 per cent of the display area in the 185 sq. metre (2,000 sq. feet) retail area for furniture displays. Most new furniture, however, is sold as soon as it is priced — sales that help the store meet its high rent payments of \$6,000 a month.

Twice a week the MCC thrift shop rents a cube van to pick up furniture — a much-needed service in Toronto where donors are willing to wait up to six weeks for pick-up services. The shop does not have a storage area. Furniture is moved into the shop through the front door. Customers looking for furniture watch while the furniture is unloaded.

"This is perfect for my 27-inch TV," said Dave Peart, as he waited for the staff to price an entertainment unit. The unit was priced at \$40. "This is a blessing, a big time blessing," he said, as he helped staff strap the entertainment unit to the dolly. "This is a solid piece of furniture — it's not flimsy — it's solid."

If the store did not have a dolly, Peart said he would have to pay an additional \$25 to hire someone to deliver the item to his one-bedroom apartment located about one kilometre from the shop.

This is the fourth time Peart used the dolly since he moved into the neighbourhood a year ago. Previous purchases include a television, dresser, phone table and book case. "It has taken me a year to furnish my apartment," said Peart, who is on disability pension. "My apartment is starting to feel like a home, instead of just an apartment."

Ki-hyung, (Mr. Kim), 82, moved to Flemingdon Park from South Korea seven years ago. "I told my daughter, when I die please return everything I have to this shop," he said, explaining most everything he owns he has purchased at the MCC shop and used the dolly to bring things home.

These days he comes to the shop mainly to visit with staff and volunteers and to meet some of the newcomers in the neighbourhood. "I come here to practice English and help other people practice English — that is the most difficult thing that newcomers face — learning the language," he said.

Ki-hyung studied English when he was in college but said he needed to take English as a second language classes when he moved to Toronto. "I learned English at age 75," he said, emphasizing the importance of having a supportive place, such as the Global Closet Thrift Shop, where he and others can practice speaking the language.

Sherk, who grew up in East Africa where her parents served as missionaries, would like to use her international experiences as well as her managerial training and background to help the shop develop meaningful volunteer opportunities that would help newcomers learn the English language and gain work experience.

Stewardship basics – 2

"There is a time for everything" — so begins the writer of Ecclesiastes (chapter 3: 1). But is there really time to do everything that we might want to do? There is so much to learn, to see and to experience — we can't possibly do it all! But, if you believe that you really are created for eternity like the Bible says (Ecclesiastes 3:11), then in reality there is a time for everything. If not here on earth, then later in paradise for those who believe.

Life on earth is short. We do not know how much time God will give us before he calls us home and when the book of our life will be opened. It is then that we will understand that the stewardship of our limited time here on earth has eternal consequences. It will be very evident how we made use of the time that we received from God. Then the measurement of our life will be measured in 'Kingdom value' — for only what is done for Christ will last, as Jesus instructed his disciples: "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit-fruit that will last." (John 15:16)

How we use our time is so different for each of us. We have individual skills, aptitudes, gifts and abilities. I may wish that I were more artistic or musical or sensitive or decisive or skilled with my hands, or that I had a greater understanding or aptitude for technology like a friend I know. However, he or she may want to have some of the 'talents' that I have. Not one of us is exactly the same even though we are all created in God's image. We all have different sets of abilities and we'll find our greatest satisfaction when we are able to match our career with our dominant abilities.

It is our use of time and our abilities that permits us to work and provide for ourselves, our families and for the work of the church. We apply our time and skills utilizing the world's resources to create goods and services. In order to do that well, we are required to be careful and wise with the resources our earth provides. Our impact on our environment is getting a lot of attention today. Finally! God mandated us to be earthkeepers as he established in Genesis. He gave us a world that was created good. Just read how often God declares that 'it was good'.

God expects us to be wise stewards of what he created to be good. He expects nothing less from us. In particular, God even places man into his special garden, the Garden of Eden and gives mankind a specific mandate "to work it and take care of it" (Genesis 2:15 — NIV). Our record as earthkeepers or gardeners indicates lots of 'working it'

Reflections on Stewardship

Rick De Graaf

but very little 'taking care of it'. Rather, our record has been rife with abuse. Let us not waste time trying to hide from God's scrutiny (like modern day Adams and Eves), making excuses and trying to minimize what is clearly evident today, as we try and protect our selfish ways.

Let us, as Christians, lead the way. Let us be busy to make the changes that are needed that move us toward a more sustainable and more caring use of earth's resources. Let each one of us be courageous leaders in our own sphere of influence, making more choices that minimize our impact, and encouraging others to do the same.

The basics of stewardship include all of the above and more: the use and care of our Time, our Talents (skills and abilities) and the Trees (natural resources). By our wise use of our time, our talents and the earth's resources we are enabled by God to create wealth — which most of us evaluate in terms of money and possessions — our Treasures (the 4th "T" of the 4 T's of stewardship). Those are the basics. May God bless our stewardship!

Stewardly Tip: A Gift of Talent. The creator blessed humankind with diversity in so many ways in music, the arts, sciences and sports. Consider offering some of your abilities as a fragrant offering to honour God with what he has entrusted to you. Think of using your ability to love God or your neighbour as an offering that acknowledges praise to the creator who put it in you in the first place. Do something for someone else today!

Readers: Share your Stewardly Tips so that we all can make better use of the resources God has entrusted to us. Submit your suggestions (by mail to Christian Courier or by email to my address below) and provide your contact information so that we can acknowledge your contribution or ask you for more details.

Next issue: Development vs. Farmland

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Church

Debate on homosexuality dominates DRC Synod

Richard van Houten

South Africa – The General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church faced major issues in church unification, land reform, baptism (and re-baptism), crime and violence, pastoral education. However, the issue that received the most attention in their four-day meeting, June 4-7, was the report about homosexual members and ministers.

In 2004, the last full General Synod created a high-level task force that was asked to reconsider the church's policy on homosexual members. That synod also apologized to its gay members and their families who were wounded by the church's judgments and exclusion. Still, this task force did not come with a clear resolution, but a sharply divided report.

Besides the report, this synod also had a case to deal with – the suspension of one of its ministers, Laurie Gaum, who had been removed from office on grounds of homosexual conduct, was appealed to synod. In addition, an open letter from 500 individuals, most of them members, was circulated, urging synod to receive its gay members as full members. There were five publications in different media, some from committee members themselves, and three of these were given to all synod delegates.

The debate was not very different from that conducted in many churches around the world. Could a gay person who was "in a relationship" serve in a church office? Or, perhaps even be a member in good standing? The DRC debated at length, but the issue had support from its senior theologians on each side. After several hours, the synod committed the matter to a special committee of the ten moderators of the DRC's ten regional synods. They were to seek a middle way.

The ten leaders were able to come back with a set of proposals the synod could accept. Among the key ideas were:

- That the Bible is the starting point for all debate on this question
- That Christ's love is the only ground for relationships in the community of faith
- That all people, regardless of sexual orientation, are included in God's love and should be received as members of the Church of Christ on the basis of their baptism and faith
- That marriage is only between a man and a woman
- Homosexual relationships and [homosexual] marriages are not acceptable as an alternative to marriage
- That both homosexual and heterosexual promiscuity are strongly condemned
- That the General Synod, having charge over the qualifications for ministers in the DRC, rules that homosexual candidates shall only be accepted if they are celibate, and
- That the synod recognizes the discretion of local church councils to adhere to the spirit of Christ's love concerning the differences over homosexuality in their congregations.

These provisions were adopted with a large majority, 266-99. The conditions preserved the idea of marriage being between a man and a woman, and it continued the necessity for a homosexual minister to remain celibate. However, in granting some discretion to congregations, it appeared to create the possibility that a local congregation might have members and

office-bearers who live in a faithful and committed homosexual relationship. Some others felt the final point was conditioned by the earlier rejection of homosexual relations as an alternative to marriage.

As the two interpretations surfaced on the final day, at least one delegate protested he had been misled. The new general synod moderator, Piet Strauss, said he believed the conditions adopted were interdependent and each must be read in the light of the others. He noted, however, that the decision did not "say everything about everything." Some demanded that this interpretation be adopted in writing, but Strauss refused, saying the present wording was sufficient.

In an executive session, the synod also restored the ministerial credentials of Laurie Gaum, mainly on procedural grounds. In the course of the various judgments and appeals, the charges had been altered. The synod further declared that since Gaum had been cleared of this charge, he could not be retried for the same incident. The synod's decision also avoided what might have been a lengthy legal battle in civil courts, which Gaum was prepared to wage. Gaum now faces a decision whether to remain a minister, since he has so far declined to pledge celibacy in homosexual relationships.

Reunification

The synod supported the work of the church's leadership in the last year, getting the reunification of the Dutch Reformed family of four denominations moving again. The synod decided on at least two rounds of consultation with the congregations of the DRC. The first will be advisory and should be completed before the end of this year. Then if a consensus emerges among the four parties to the process, a second round of consultation will take place before decisions are made.

At the synod itself, in a small-group process, questions were raised about reunification. About 80 per cent of all questions were on the process itself, while other concerns were raised about further division and about language. On the language issue, it is clear that all parties are agreed that various language groups must be preserved and protected in the union. Congregations will retain their own language, and each broader body will decide for itself about language use in meetings.

During the discussion, Coenie Burger, the moderator until the end of this synod session, and Piet Strauss both noted that congregations will not be forced to disband or unite with another. Each congregation is a legal entity responsible for its own decisions and service.

Burger further noted that the process is still fragile. It is not possible, he said, that the process could be finished by the end of 2008.

Violence

Earlier this year the DRC joined many other churches in South Africa calling for action on crime and violence in South African society. The synod affirmed that call and pleaded with the government not to leave its citizens in the lurch. The synod affirmed that God wants the world ruled by law and by governments, and it is their duty to punish wrongdoers and protect its citizens.

Richard van Houten is General Secretary of the Reformed Ecumenical Council, of which the CRC and DRC are both members.

Poland bans feast-day trading for shops

Jonathan Luxmoore

Warsaw (ENI) – Polish parliamentarians have voted to ban trading on Roman Catholic feast days after complaints that foreign supermarkets, such as British-owned Tesco, are ignoring the religious needs of workers.

"The forcing of work, especially from women who fulfil a key family role, is negatively evaluated by most of society, while the payments offered for working on feast days aren't satisfactory," Stanislaw Szwed, a member of Poland's governing Law and Justice Party, which sponsored the bill, told members of parliament during a July 6 debate.

Under the new law, trading is to be banned on 12 days each year, including Easter, Pentecost, Corpus Christi, the feast of the Assumption, and All Saints Day, as well as at Christmas, and on New Year's Day and Poland's national Constitution and Independence days. The law will not apply to restaurants, hotels and petrol stations, or to small shops with single owners.

The decision follows complaints about low pay and excessive hours among Tesco's 25,000 Polish employees, some of whom have also objected to being denied Sundays off.

A British-based spokesperson for the company, Monika Kosinska, told Ecumenical News International that all Tesco employees had the right to choose their working hours.

"We treat people fairly and offer them attractive benefits and development opportunities," Kosinska said. "Each employee's working schedule is tailored to the individual, and where there are specific requests we respect them, such as not working night shifts or on certain days," she added.

With six million customers weekly, Tesco operates 280 supermarkets in Poland and plans to open a further 50 stores in the country. Among recent advertisements, the company reductions for items, such as televisions, bicycles and MP3 players, "most often bought as presents" for children receiving their first communion.

Roman Catholics warn of continuing vocations crisis

Jonathan Luxmoore

Warsaw (ENI) – A Roman Catholic organization has blamed a dramatic fall in the number of priestly vocations in Europe on an "allergy to faith", and warned against expectations of an immediate solution.

"Europe is suffering from a certain lack of vocations to the priesthood and religious life," the European Vocations Service (EVS) said in a statement.

"Europe is suffering from widespread atheism, a sort of intolerance of truth, an allergy to faith and, sometimes, a certain Christophobia," said the EVS, which is chaired by Polish Bishop Wojciech Polak under the auspices of the Council of (Catholic) European Bishops' Conferences.

The statement was issued on July 3 after the annual EVS congress at Baske Ustarije in Croatia, which was attended by vocations directors from Europe's 34 Roman Catholic bishops' conferences.

"Uniting forces to work together to distinguish the specificity of each vocation is becoming one of our highest priorities," the EVS said. It added, "In the great family that is the church, either everyone grows

together or nobody grows."

Roman Catholic vocations have declined sharply in most European countries over the past decade, with only Poland, Slovenia and Ukraine reporting a fluctuating increase.

In France and Belgium, the ordination of new priests is far outnumbered by clergy deaths, while a similar decline is reported in Italy, Austria and Germany.

In Ireland, where the Roman Catholic church has closed seven of its eight seminaries, only 11 priests were ordained for 26 dioceses in 2005, compared to 659 in 1965.

Poland's 84 Roman Catholic seminaries admitted 1351 new students in 2006, compared to just 31 who enrolled at the six seminaries serving the church in England and Wales.

In its statement, the EVS said continued vocations would depend on the two "sacraments of mission – priesthood and marriage". It believed that family life remained "the first area to cultivate" in a search for new pastors.

"There is no immediate solution to the problem of numbers; it requires a process of long and patient maturation," the EVS said.

Church

Two pastors shot dead in Colombia

CSW – Two Pentecostal pastors were assassinated in southern Colombia; the 17th Brigade of the leftist guerrilla group, FARC, appears to be responsible.

Pastor Humberto Mendez, age 63, and Pastor Joel Cruz Garcia, age 27, were approached at home around 8:00 p.m. on July 5, after they preached at an open-air service in the village of El Dorado, located in the department of Huila in the southern part of the country, where FARC has a strong presence. According to church representatives a group of armed men wearing camouflage clothing called them by name and led them away. The bodies of the two men were found the next day 40 metres apart; both had been shot in the head.

While authorities and church leaders seem to agree that FARC committed the murders, the motive is unclear. The families of the pastors have said that they never received any warnings or threats from any group. According to reports by the news agency, www.GospelNoticias.com, the assassinations were in response to the participation of local churches in nationwide protests against terrorism and kidnapping. Church representatives in the area, however, also point to the ongoing risks that accompany preaching and teaching Christian principles in a region with a significant guerrilla presence. According to church leaders at the local and national levels, FARC has declared protestant pastors to be legitimate military targets.

These two assassinations are representative of a wider problem for communities of faith, particularly those located in rural areas and conflict zones, across the country. Two church based NGO's, Justapaz and the Commission for Restoration, Life and Peace, have documented over 100 targeted assassinations of pastors and other church leaders across the country since 2000. Many are a response to a refusal on the part of the pastors to participate in or support the activities of the armed groups, including paying protection money or tolerating the recruitment of young people from their congregations into the armed groups.

While FARC is not responsible for all of these murders, they have been implicated in a significant percentage of them. Right-wing paramilitary groups and another leftist guerrilla group, the ELN, are believed to be responsible for the rest.

Tina Lambert, Advocacy Director of CSW, said, "Our prayers are with the families and the communities of these two men at this very difficult time. It is completely unacceptable for the FARC, or any other armed group, to target church leaders. These were two pastors, both

Anto Akkara

Bangalore, India (ENI) – Despite protests in major Pakistani cities over an attack that left more than 100 people dead at a mosque in the country's capital, Muslims and Christians in both Pakistan and India have welcomed the action.

"Those people [inside the mosque] were behaving as a law unto themselves. It had to be ended," Mohammed Tahseen, a Muslim and director of the South Asia Partnership – Pakistan, told Ecumenical News International on July 13 from Lahore, two days after the incident.

Previously, President Pervez Musharraf said the raid on the Red Mosque in Islamabad had to be carried out and was triggered by militants who had "challenged the writ of the government". At the same time, there were protests as relatives buried the dead from the siege, and three suicide bombers struck in northern Pakistan.

Cecil Choudhury, a Roman Catholic and executive secretary of the All Pakistan Minorities Alliance, told ENI that the army

operation was "long overdue". He noted that female students were among the kidnappers at the mosque, who had seized police officials as well as Chinese nationals as part of a campaign to try to bring about Islamic rule.

"The majority of the population here has welcomed the army operation, although they are saddened about the bloodshed inside the mosque," said Choudhury. Nevertheless, he criticised the government, "for allowing the militants to run a parallel government from the mosque".

Those killed in the storming of the Red Mosque included at least 73 militants and 10 security personnel. The attack followed the refusal of armed Islamic students and militants camping inside the religious centre to lay down their arms.

Tahseen accused some fundamentalists in Pakistan's security apparatus of having played a key role in enabling the siege, which lasted for more than a week, to happen in the first place.

"How could a mosque store have so much ammunition [that enabled the militants] to fight

the army for days? These weapons could not have been brought in without the support of security officials," Tahseen said. "A place of worship should have been never made a battle ground like this."

In India, Muslim clerics condemned the use of the mosque for militant activities, and said it had tarnished Islam's image worldwide.

"Lal Masjid had become a centre of militant activities," the Press Trust of India quoted Abdul Hammed Nomani, a spokesperson of Jamiat-Ulema Hind, a Muslim group, as saying. "The mosque's clerics were directly challenging the country's authority and they had to face what they faced."

Echoing similar views, Shia cleric Kalbe Sadiq supported the decision by Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf to send the army into the mosque, and stressed that extremism is not allowed in Islam. "The action had to be taken against militants," Sadiq said. "Those in al-Qaeda and the Taliban who link violence with Islam are misguided people."

S. African apartheid officials face trial for attack on church leader

David Wanless

Cape Town (ENI) – South Africa's former minister of police in the last apartheid era government, Adriaan Vlok, and the police chief under his watch, Johann van der Merwe, are to be charged with attempted murder, the country's National Prosecuting Authority has said.

The authority's spokesperson, Panyaza Lesufi, said on 17 July the two men and three other former high-ranking police officials are expected to appear in court on August 17. They will be tried for a 1989 attack on the Rev. Frank Chikane, who, at the time, was the general secretary of the South African Council of Churches, an organization at the forefront of the struggle against minority white rule.

This is the first case of the prosecution

of apartheid-era atrocities in which alleged perpetrators were denied or did not seek amnesty from South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which was led by Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, retired archbishop Desmond Tutu.

"We have decided to prosecute the five men on various charges, including conspiracy and the attempted murder of Chikane," Lesufi said on 17 July. "We believe we have a very strong case against the men and are ready to prosecute." Chikane is now director general of President Thabo Mbeki's office.

Evidence was given during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings, held after South Africa's first universal suffrage elections, that Chikane's clothing had been

impregnated with chemicals that attacked his nervous system. Chikane mysteriously fell ill during a visit to the United States 18 years ago but recovered after treatment.

Now aged 70, Vlok, in September 2006, asked Chikane to forgive him, and washed the government official's feet as an act of penitence during a meeting in the capital Pretoria.

Lesufi said those facing charges were to have been taken to court in 2004 after failing to apply for amnesty from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The prosecuting authority decided, however, not to prosecute them at the time, saying it had sought to solve the matter through discussions with a legal team representing the accused men.

Chinese government expels over 100 foreign Christians

CSW – Over 100 foreign nationals have been removed from China between April and June 2007 for their alleged participation in illegal religious activities, according to China Aid Association (CAA).

CAA reports that these expulsions and deportations form part of a government campaign, launched in February 2007, to prevent foreign Christians from engaging in mission activities in the run-up to the Beijing Olympics next year.

Some of the foreign nationals had reportedly been working in the area for over fifteen years and include teachers working for the English Language Institute, China (ELIC).

CAA reports that some of the American citizens expelled from the country describe how their passports were confiscated for between two and seven days, and they

were not allowed to have access to the US Embassy in Beijing. Some of the foreign nationals will be prevented from returning to China for five years.

Christian Solidarity Worldwide's National Director, Stuart Windsor, said: "China is preparing to welcome visitors from around the world to the Beijing Olympics next summer. However, the profile of the games must not be allowed to overshadow government activities such as this targeted removal of Christian foreign nationals from the country. China's record on religious liberty is poor, and must be addressed by the international community as the country takes a more prominent role on the world stage. Individual governments also have a duty to send a clear message to the Chinese government that this mistreatment of foreign citizens will not be tolerated."



Mormonism

The story and beliefs of Mormonism

Bert den Boggende

With warmer weather in southern Alberta, young Mormons walking the streets and knocking on doors become more common. While there is no congregation here in Brooks, there is one in Rosemary, a village about 30km NW of Brooks. Its building is perhaps the second largest in the village after the school but before the Mennonite church. Mormons often sound like conservative Christians, an impression reinforced by the church's website (www.lds.org/portal/site/LDSOrg). With Mormon Mitt Romney running as a Republican presidential candidate in the US, perhaps a closer look at the beliefs of Mormons is warranted. It's a belief that Mark Twain ridiculed and Arthur Conan Doyle portrayed as evil.

Although in 1887 the US Congress passed a law abolishing the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, it is now one of the fastest growing and influential religions. The church holds to obligatory tithing, has ownership of industries, radio stations, and USA's largest cattle ranch, even though the Book of Mormon often condemns wealth and power.

The golden plates

In 1827, twenty-two-year-old Joseph Smith claimed that an angel directed him to buried golden plates in northern New York State. These contained, in "reformed Egyptian," the history of descendants of the tribe of Joseph who during the sixth century BC miraculously crossed the Pacific Ocean

and landed in America. With the aid of magic stones Smith translated the plates into what is now called the Book of Mormon, which consists of 15 books, some of which are as short as Obadiah or as long as Isaiah.

In 1830 he founded a new church, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, while the region, which historians have dubbed the "burned-over district," experienced the Second Great Awakening. In 1835 he published *Doctrine and Covenants*, a basic book of Mormon theology, and in 1842, *The Pearl of Great Price*, a standard Mormon scripture containing, among others, The Articles of Faith as well as writings of Abraham. In 1844 a mob murdered Smith and his brother Hyrum.

Articles of Faith

The sect's internet provides a summary of its tenets in The Articles of Faith. Without much editorializing, I want to look first at this summary, which suggests the conservative nature of Mormons and then glance at some material not mentioned in the summary. Finally, I give a brief summary of the Book of Mormon (my copy is more than 500 pages text of two columns each) with some critical comments.

According to The Articles of Faith, Mormons believe in the trinity; that human beings will be punished for their own sins; that through Christ's atonement all mankind may be saved, depending on the obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel; that human beings are called to repentance; that baptism should be by immersion and indicates the remission of sins; that the gift of the Holy Spirit is conveyed through the laying on of hands; that the church organization should reflect the primitive church; that people can receive the gift of tongues and interpretation of tongues, prophecy, revelations, visions, and healing; that the Bible, as far as it is translated correctly, as well as the Book of Mormon are the word of God and that revelation still continues; that there will be a literal gathering of Israel,



This statue of Joseph Smith, founding President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (or Mormon church), and his brother Hyrum stands in front of Carthage Jail, the place of their martyrdom.

a restoration of the ten tribes, a renewed earth over which Christ personally will reign, and a new Jerusalem built on the American continent; that everyone has the right to worship God according to one's own conscience; that people are subject to governmental authority and should obey and honour the law; that people should be honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous and do good.

While not completely orthodox, taken at face value these beliefs suggest a general conservatism. However, further probing indicates Mormonism's unorthodoxy. First of all, while Scripture states that God is a spirit, Smith claimed that God has a physical body. Furthermore, before any human beings were born they were already begotten by God and their skin colour at birth would depend on their faithfulness during their pre-existence: white for the faithful, black for the less faithful. Mormons may believe in the trinity, but it's not the trinity of orthodoxy, since Jesus' divinity is not unique, for anyone can attain divinity; in other words, Mormonism ultimately accepts a form of polytheism.

Superficially the atonement seems orthodox: Jesus is professed to be the Son of God, he redeems the people from death through the resurrection and saves them from sin if they repent. However, redemption also depends keeping the commandments. Thus, instead of justification by faith

alone, regarded as a pernicious doctrine, salvation also needs to be earned through good works. And baptism by immersion is absolutely necessary for salvation.

While the church now officially accepts monogamy, it initially favoured polygamy. Joseph Smith may have had fifty wives, although he acknowledged only one. Those familiar with tracing genealogies may also be familiar with the Mormons enormous cataloguing of genealogies, an idea based on the notion that families can live forever together. Perhaps this section could end on a less critical note. In contrast to much modern philosophy, Mormons hold that life has a sacred purpose.

The Book of Mormon

It has been argued that Catholicism is based on the Bible and on tradition; likewise it can be argued that Mormonism is based on the Bible and the Book of Mormon. I do admit that I needed a lot of willpower to finish the book because I found it dreadfully boring. It is excessively repetitive: the phrase "it came to pass" occurs perhaps a few thousand times.

The book opens with First Nephi, which starts the story of Lehi, the father of Nephi, in 600 BC and ends with the Book of Moroni in AD 421. There are numerous quotes from Scripture, notably from Isaiah. Modern textual criticism has dated these biblical quotes long after this lost Joseph tribe left Israel, or as it is called, the "land of Jerusalem." In addition, centuries before Jesus' birth the exact date of Jesus birth was prophesied, as was the name of Mary – referred to as white, an indication of the book's racism – while Christ is frequently used as a name rather than a title. The golden, sometimes called brass, plates seemed to contain the whole of the Torah, and however "reformed Egyptian" may have been engraved, those plates could never contain the whole Torah, never mind the rest of the tribe's experiences, and their weight would be too formidable to carry by one person, as is suggested.

This rather quarrelsome remnant went in some kind of submarine, supposedly using some sort of compass or ball (called liahona), to America (the conti-

nent is not named as such and the land could refer to Australia, but the finding of the plates would make this identification difficult). In America they spread rapidly and continued to quarrel and fight each other. There is no reference to America's natives, even though they spread from coast to coast. It has been assumed that the tribe became the Indians, but their late arrival would historically be untenable. Moreover, archaeologists have been unable to identify any of the large cities they built.

In America they used steel and cement, were familiar with money (the denominations are invented), horses and chariots, elephants and asses as well as such musical instruments as viols and tabrets. Scientifically, geographically, archaeologically, linguistically, and historically the whole story is untenable. It is not useful here to follow the numerous wars – there is a defence of bloodshed – that make up most of the book. What is important is that the Nephites and the various other tribes often departed from God's word and that, remarkably, adherents to the true faith often miraculously win because they keep God's word and his commandments. There is an emphasis on some leading figures who tried to call their people back to God. Their mission work provided the model for today's young Mormons.

Interwoven among the accounts of their wars are belief statements. Even before the Joseph remnant left Israel, the people were already called the church, a word not found in the Old Testament. Nephi and his descendants received the gospel; they knew about the Holy Ghost, were familiar with the term 'Son of God,' with the events surrounding Jesus' birth, baptism, crucifixion and his atonement, and with the apostles, centuries before anyone else knew. In fact, they calculated their calendar from Christ's birth, six centuries before the rest of the Christian world! After Jesus' death most of their cities burned, sank into the sea or were covered by earth. After his death Jesus showed himself to them, teaching them the Lord's Prayer, the beatitudes, and fasting, and instituting the Lord's Supper as well as other material taken from the King James Version of Matthew, Mark and Luke.

The biblical material is mixed with non-biblical matter, including



Times



The Salt Lake Temple is a worldwide icon of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, popularly known as the Mormon Church. The massive granite, six-spire edifice was constructed in a neo-gothic style over the course of an astounding 40-year period between 1853 and 1893.

a second Ascension. Death is temporal, for "if the flesh should rise no more our spirits must become subject to that angel who fell from before the presence of the Eternal God, and became the devil, to rise no more." (2 Nephi 9:8) There is more than one resurrection, "And there cometh a resurrection, even a first resurrection, yea, even a resurrection of those that have been, and who are, and who shall be, even until the resurrection of Christ – for so shall he be called." (Book of Mosiah 15:21).

According to the Book of Alma, it does not matter if there are two, three or more resurrections (40:5, 16-23), but the first resurrection cannot be that of the souls and "their consignment to happiness

or misery." At one time or another everyone will be resurrected, although a brother of Nephi had already been resurrected. Those who do good will receive their reward (blessed materially and with resurrection to happiness); the emphasis on doing good and keeping the law has a tendency to work righteousness.

There are some confusing statements, including "Christ was the God, the Father of all things," and "Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son" (Book of Mosiah 7:27 and Book of Ether 3:14. Father and Son are often confused); "priests were ordained after the order of his Son;" "he that knoweth not good from evil is blameless; but he that knoweth good and evil,

to him it is given according to his desires, whether he desireth good or evil, life or death, joy or remorse of conscience" (Alma 13:2; 29:5), and such contradiction as stating that unbelievers don't dwindle yet they do.

Finally, there are some modern influences. For instance, Alma 46:13 suggests the influence of nineteenth-century America in its idea of liberty, and Helaman 12:15 states that the earth rather than the sun moves, clearly indicating a post-Copernican influence. The book ends with Moroni launching a strong attack on pedobaptism, regarded as sinful.

Near the end of the story Moroni, the great missionary who was killed, hid the collected material;

Summer starts; swallows depart

Flowers & Thistles

Curt Gesch

The seasons don't pay very much attention to calendars, so why should we. We eagerly await warmer weather, sunnier weather, in February. My neighbour declares that any day above freezing is fine for wearing shorts.

The one really hot day – 28° C – in April makes us drool, shed clothing, and start the mower. May brings improvement. More hot days interspersed with cold, windy, wet (rain or snow) or just plain miserable weather.

But "what is so rare as a day in June?" asks a poet. I suppose the answer is "other days in June." June brings whole weeks of warmth. Bulbs, perennials, and shrubs burst into bloom. Robins flaunt their fecundity. Rabbits smirk at robins. Tree swallows feed their young.

But "high summer" starts in July and has its own distinctives. For me that includes the following:

Annual flowers – cosmos, petunias, geraniums (pelargoniums), and marigolds – strut their stuff. "Ah, this is what we were made for," they say in flowery language.

The lawn still looks good but needs less mowing.

Beans look like they are finally in their element, displaying larger, darker green leaves and sporting their blossoms.

Slugs and snails complain: "How are we supposed to slime our way across this dry, dry earth?"

Chicks that were "Aw, so cute!" now trip and sway, and ape adults with awkward success.

The bears look bigger. Without their winter fat and long hair, they appear taller, more like standard poodles than Winnie or Smokey.

And the tree swallows get ready to migrate.

There is something melancholy about tree swallows leaving just as summer begins. For a month they have been busy, swooping, diving, chittering, devouring gnats and mosquitoes. Every morning we are greeted with swallow-song.

But now almost all the young have fledged. No awkwardness in these teenagers. They chase each other, soar, mastering air currents, practise dodges, and check out every cavity – experts say this is checking the real estate pages for next year.

But they will soon leave. Early in July they begin holding congregational meetings on wires. By the middle of the month most are gone. To staging areas, and then south.

I know summer is a-comin' in when swallows prefigure its end. That leaves me the day.

Today.

A day to plant; a day to tend the garden.

A day to work; a day to rest.

A day to exult in health; a day to notice the aches of increasing age.

A day to think; a day to meditate.

A day, after all, of salvation.

The end of summer is there in its beginning. But today is enough.

Let others have four-year terms, plans for a lifetime, programs and plans for the future.

I'll take today if it is a day of shalom, however short.

*Curt Gesch is a retired teacher living in Telkwa, BC.
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Moroni dug it up and added some further material. Centuries later Joseph Smith found the plates, as was foretold!

Recently on a Sunday afternoon two young Mormons knocked at my door. When I asked them about some bizarre notions in the Book of Mormon, they could only reply, "Did you pray about them?" Apparently it does not seem to matter

to them that so much is untenable. Mormons may be conservative, but in many respects they are highly unorthodox. As a historian I can only conclude that the Book of Mormon is pure fabrication.

See also Richard N. and Joan K. Ostling, *Mormon America: The Power and the Promise* (San Francisco: Harper, 1999)

Women

Interview with Mary Amolo

Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

When I visited the Kyangwali Refugee Settlement in Uganda this past March as part of the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) Refugee Learning Tour, I met a remarkable woman, 31-year-old Mary Amolo. From the District of Kaberamaido in northeastern Uganda, a region plagued by Lords Resistance Army wars and Karamajong cattle rustling, she was raised in a polygamous family, but without her mother who died when Amolo was young. Her peasant father struggled to send his children to school.

Throughout Amolo's primary and secondary education, she walked six kilometers daily to reach her school, as many African children do. While in secondary school, Amolo became a Christian and joined the Church of Uganda. With the financial help of a relative, she earned a diploma in social work and social administration, and eventually a B.A. in development studies.

In September 2005, Amolo began working with Christian Children Fund in five Internally Displaced Peoples (IDP) camps, providing child protection in cases of sexual and gender-based violence. Soon after, she applied for a position at Kyangwali Refugee Settlement as a Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) field coordinator for International Medical Corps (IMC), a non-governmental organization. In November 2006 she became the sole staff person responsible for SGBV issues in a settlement of approximately 17,000 refugees. In a recent e-mail interview, Amolo explained the daily challenges she faces in her current position.

What comprises sexual and gender-based violence?

Sexual and gender-based violence is violence directed at a person because of his or her gender. These include rape, attempted rape, defilement (sexual abuse), sexual exploitation, sexual assault, indecent assault, sexual harassment, and prostitution. Harmful traditional practices that we encounter in Kyangwali are early marriages, forced marriages, ghost marriages, widow inheritance, and domestic violence.

How do you deal with the strain of the responsibility of being the only person in charge of women's and girls' issues in the settlement?

It is true I am the only staff of IMC in Kyangwali working to prevent sexual and gender-based violence. However, I have the help of twenty-four volunteers, two of whom are supervisors. They spread messages on SGBV by going door-to-door; by having impromptu discussions and community dialogue; by showing videos; by performing dramas, poems, and songs; and by distributing materials like posters, booklets, T-shirts, banners, and playing cards. They also involve the youth in co-curricular activities like football, netball,

basketball, and other sports. The intention is to bring them together and discuss problems that affect youth. This also helps them to keep busy and so avoid engaging in risky behavior that could lead them to sexual and gender-based violence.

Are there other staff members in Kyangwali to whom you can talk about your work? Where do you find the strength to carry on day by day?

I get my strength through collaborating with other implementing partners in the settlement such as the health department, police, Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), community services, and education department to respond to the problems and needs of survivors. These include arrest of perpetrators, medical treatment, psycho-social support, and reintegration into the community. I also have an encouraging supervisor (SGBV Program Manager) based in Kampala. She gives technical guidance. She is like a mother to me. There is a gender mobilizer within the organization Aktion Afrika Hilfe (AAH) to whom I can talk to sometimes and share responsibility. She assists me in collecting and compiling monthly data for SGBV cases and shares the report during coordination meetings.

Have you ever felt endangered or threatened by men in the settlement because you are trying to help women and children?

I have never experienced any threats from men. Most of them are positive and supportive because they have been sensitized. However, there are few cases of complaints from men who say that the program favors women over men.

Hence, they have nicknamed the IMC car "Nang' abagabo" in the Kinyabwisha language, which means "I hate men." We have tried to address this problem by involving men in the program. For example, we have a group of male participants who were perpetrators, but have now reformed. They give testimonies during our campaigns.

When I visited Kyangwali



settlement, I noticed a sign that read: "Real Men Don't Rape and Violate Their Women." What is the community's response to that sign?

The slogan means that a man who is involved in SGBV is not a true man. Real men are supposed to love their wives and children, and to ensure that there is peace in the family. The community is positive about the slogan because they also say that a real man should respect himself and members of his family. However, some men say, "Why does IMC emphasize that men are perpetrators because even women are?"

What role do you play in the lives of people suffering from HIV/AIDS?

HIV/AIDS is a reality in the settlement. Where there is rape, defilement, and forced and early marriages, HIV/AIDS also exists. The two are inseparable. Using the same strategies that I mentioned earlier in terms of what my volunteers do, I educate the community about HIV/AIDS. However, I do not do this alone. I invite the health staff to assist me because they are more technical in that field. I supply condoms and anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs) to AAH to prevent the spread and manage HIV/AIDS. The fact that IMC is trying to prevent SGBV through awareness-creation is also preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS. However, refugees still lack knowledge about HIV/AIDS. The kinds of questions they ask during information sessions show that they need more education. They ask questions like, "Why should I take my wife to deliver the baby in the hospital? Our women have been delivering at home since time immemorial without any problem." Or they ask, "What should I do when my wife is tested and finds that she is HIV/AIDS positive and I am negative?"

What action do you take to stop young girls from being forced into marriage?

Are you able to help them once that has happened?

The issue of forced marriages is really common in Kyangwali settlement, both in the Sudanese and Congolese communities. In those cultures, when a girl is between the ages of fourteen and eighteen, she is expected to get married. The girls are also prompted into marriage when they see all their friends getting married. Sometimes the parents begin directing certain words at their children and even go further by arranging for the marriage. However, communities hardly report such cases. They prefer to handle them at



the community level. We only play a role through awareness-creation. Of course, it is very hard to help in a situation when the case is not reported. Sometimes we visit schools and talk to the girls alone and to the boys alone. At other times, I give them the testimony of my success in education. We encourage them to stay at school even if they have problems pressing in on them because marriage is not a solution. One Congolese girl was touched by my testimony. She approached me because she is an orphan and was foreseeing problems in her education. I linked her to my friends. Now she is being sponsored. IMC does not have any funding to support the education of young girls, yet this is the major reason why they opt for early marriage.

How are you able to help women and children when violence is committed against them?

We have educated the community to report any incidence of violence to the police, OPM, health department, community services, IMC or United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The survivor would be provided with psycho-social counseling, support, and treatment. And the perpetrator would be arrested. However, sometimes communities report very late when the perpetrator has run away or when the girl is already pregnant. In such cases, the police continue searching for the perpetrator, and the victim is encouraged to attend a prenatal clinic. In case of an emergency, for example, when a woman has been battered and chased away with the children by the husband, IMC has an SGBV reception center where they can stay while the OPM and police arrest the perpetrator. Sometimes both parties are counseled and reconciled, but in other instances the wife is relocated to another plot if the husband has rejected her completely.

Could you share several stories about the lives of women and girls in the resettlement camp who have needed your help?

Women

The following are three reported cases in which the individuals tell their own stories.

My mother was against me right from the time I was still at home. Before I got married, she used to abuse me, insult me, and mistreat me. When the abuse became too much, I thought of moving away from her by getting a husband who would love and take care of me. I left school when I was in primary seven and got married. I bore a baby boy with my husband. One day my mother followed me to my home and poured out all the food that I was cooking. She cursed me, saying I would get problems in producing my child and told me never to return home. My husband in turn had to chase me because of the behavior of my mother. Though she told me not to go home, I still went back home. While at home with my child, my mother would always go to drink and come back to abuse me. She even reached the extent of removing the clothes and walking naked before me saying that she did not want the baby boy I had produced and therefore she would do all the best so that the child dies. My mother wanted a baby girl who would assist her in the future. One night she came back after drinking and severely beat me. This forced me to escape to the police station. The female police woman took me to community services and the IMC coordinator. I was put in the reception center and now I am being supported by IMC and community services in terms of food, utensils, bedding and other necessities. My husband went back to Sudan.

I am a nursing aid. My problem arose at my place of work. My colleague was terminated by the health coordinator because of absenteeism. Instead, he turned around and said I was the one who reported him to the health coordinator. He therefore started threatening my life. He went back to Sudan and joined Sudanese Peoples Liberation Army, but he vowed to come back and kill me. In fear for my life, I reported to OPM who handled my case and put me at the reception center. Meanwhile, the relatives of my husband and the neighbors have advised him to abandon me or else he would be involved in the conflict. I have been supported by IMC while at the reception center. I have two children, but my husband is not helping me at all. Sometimes I have to go to wash people's plates in the restaurant so that I am given food to bring to the children. I also sold maize and clothes in order to survive. I feel like throwing away these children or else kill them so that I can rest from the burden. However, I have been allocated a plot in the nearest village so that my security is guaranteed. Meanwhile, I start cultivation for survival.

It was on the Sabbath (Saturday) when the perpetrator came to my home and found me sick. When I sent one of my children inside the house to bring me some drinking water, the perpetrator told me that his wife had made some bushera (a local drink). He requested me to go with him and get some. I went with him to his home with my children. He gave my children and me bushera in a jug and poured some in cups for us to drink. The children then took the jug home. No sooner had the children gone than the man started telling me how his wife does not know how to make the bed and called her a difficult lady. So he requested me to go with him in his bedroom and advise him about his problem. I said that I could not enter another woman's bedroom in her absence. The man stood up, held me tight by my arms, and threw me on his bed. He told me not to make noise because then he would say I was stealing his beans. However, I shouted at the top of my voice. But the man continued to remove my pants forcefully. By then my children had also returned from home and started crying because they heard me scream. One of my children had gone to the roadside to look for people to save me. People came and rescued me, but the man had already penetrated me and I was bleeding. I then went to the roadside where I met Timothy, the Community Educator, who took me to the police where I was given a form to take to the Health Center. The doctor examined me and he sent me back to police. The police did their investigation. They interrogated the women who removed the man from me and found out that I was actually raped. I was asked to give a statement and went up to the scene and found evidence. The perpetrator was arrested. The father of the perpetrator and his wife made a follow up and so I was called to a nearby town by a police officer. He asked me to forgive the perpetrator and go back and negotiate the case at home since both of us were Seventh Day Adventists. Meanwhile, the police officer had withdrawn all the documents. I refused to submit to his request. He took back the documents to his bosses and the perpetrator was presented to the courts of justice. The family of the perpetrator called all the relatives and attacked me together with my family saying either the survivor or the wife of the perpetrator would die. That family is threatening us and those who were my witnesses. Our main worry is that we are close neighbors, ten meters from each other.

About her challenging position in Kyangwali, Amolo says, "The grace of God, and all my previous work and experience prepared me for my job. I feel blessed and committed to my work."

Pictures of recent Womens' Day Celebrations with government officials in attendance.



Ecclesiastes

The poetry of growing old

*...before the sun and the light
and the moon and the stars grow dark,
and the clouds return after the rain;*

*when the keepers of the house tremble,
and the strong men stoop,
when the grinders cease because they are few,
and those looking through the windows grow dim;*

*when the doors to the street are closed
and the sound of grinding fades;
when men rise up at the sound of birds,
but all their songs grow faint;*

*when men are afraid of heights
and of dangers in the streets;
when the almond tree blossoms
and the grasshopper drags himself along
and desire no longer is stirred.*

*Remember him - before the silver cord is severed,
or the golden bowl is broken;
before the pitcher is shattered at the spring,
or the wheel broken at the well,*

*and the dust returns to the ground it came from,
and the spirit returns to God who gave it.*

Ecclesiastes 12:2-5a,6,7.

A. A. van Ruler

This last part of the book of Ecclesiastes calls for further explanation. And deepening ourselves in this passage is worth our while. It is a striking poetic description, composed of images and allegory, of the process of aging and dying.

In vs. 2 the writer uses a very simple image. He compares getting old to a winter day in Palestine: the sunlight is obscured, and even the moon and stars disappear behind the clouds. Day after day there is nothing but rain. Even when the rain stops, new clouds quickly gather.

We all know something of the gloom of such rainy days. The evenings seem barren and empty. This is how some experience old age, suggests the Preacher - one rainy day after another, always overcast and dark. Nothing but darkness and tears over existence.

In vs. 3 the writer resorts to an extended allegory. Human life is like a palace. The guards are our arms and hands, which are beginning to tremble. The strong men are our legs, which are becoming bent. There are workers in the palace - the grinders, that is, our teeth and molars - but they have stopped working. Quite a few have gone missing too. And then there are the palace beauties, the noble ladies - our eyes. Once the vitality of life shone from them, but they are now growing dim.

In every way the palace is falling into ruin. So the doors leading outside are closed. This probably refers to our hearing. Deafness often shuts off the elderly from the outside world: there is less that reaches them from the outside, and they no longer reach out as much. The sound of the grinding, the speech that issues from the mouth, diminishes. The voice becomes faint and reedy. Sometimes the speech of the elderly becomes impossible to understand. The sound - the melody - of their voices are muted.

At last the writer abandons his images and allegories, and he describes old age in literal terms. When we become old, we hesitate at climbing steep slopes, and we spot all sorts of dangers along the way. We no longer trust ourselves in heavy traffic. We begin to feel as if we



Melancholy by Domenico Fetti.

no longer belong in the world, even though being in the world is essential to our human creatureliness. The almond tree blossoms - our hair turns white. The grasshopper drags himself along - we move only with difficulty. We lose our appetite.

In closing he adds two more images. Life is very precious: it is a golden bowl, it hangs by a silver cord. But when the cord is cut, the bowl shatters. Life is not just a bowl; it is also a spring. But when the wheel by which the pitcher is being lowered into the well breaks, the pitcher shatters, and eventually the pieces return to the ground from which they came.

Thus far the poetic description of what it means to grow old and die. That we can wax poetic about such a thing and describe it in such beautiful images is a remarkable thing, isn't it? We are not just moved by youth and beauty; we are also moved to write poetry about old age and death.

This doesn't mean that we are completely aestheticizing everything. To do so would be to ignore the content and seriousness of things and to focus only on the form, the power they have to stir our emotions. Then the bad and the good, suffering and joy, guilt and virtue all become qualitatively the same, for all possess the power to move us. We must guard against such an aesthetic stance that takes pleasure in the devil and in evil as it does in God and the good. Anyone who gives up the contrast between good and evil in their absoluteness, warns Martin Buber, betrays everything. The Preacher would be in complete agreement.

Nevertheless, he can wax poetic about old age and death. It's a theme that grips him. This is probably rooted in his sharp sense of reality. We are God's creatures. We truly exist. Life is a gift. It is a great and precious gift.

How is it, then, that it is subject to the kind of attacks we experience in old age?

If life were nothing, a product of chance, then death would be liberating. But if life is a gift, then death is a strange riddle, a disaster, an enemy. This insight stirs the poet so deeply that he reaches for numerous images to describe it.

Does his description contain a note of sorrow? When can we truly grieve about growing old and dying? When we are young we remain largely untouched by the meaning of aging for those who are old. When we are middle-aged, thoughts of death begin to stalk us, but we ward them off. When we are old, we are gradually forced to acknowledge that fact. But do we really grieve at old age the way we would, for example, the death of a child? Is the Preacher sorrowful in his poetic description of aging? Is he lamenting the process?

His description, we might say, appears largely matter-of-fact. But this poetic passage comes at the end of the book for a reason. The Preacher began with the refrain: "Meaningless! Meaningless! Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless." He didn't mean to say that things are not real, that they are nothing but a beautiful illusion or

a bad dream. What he meant was that they don't add up to very much, that they don't produce an awful lot. What does life deliver? What is the meaning of all our effort and exertion? Is life like a beautiful bowl of wax fruit - all color and form but without substance?

It is this kind of futility or meaningless that is highlighted by old age and death. And this is why the Preacher is moved to poetic expression. This is where his thesis about the meaninglessness of things gets its ultimate confirmation. This is why he ends his book with this passage of poetry.

There is, however, one thing we must not forget. The Preacher is a thinker. There is nothing he doesn't think about. He thinks things to pieces. He thinks them through to their core, their empty core.

But he is a thinker with respect. In it all he remembers that he is a mere creature. In himself he can't plumb any further than to the meaninglessness of things, but he does not want to have the last word. As a created being he stands before the face of his Creator, and he has no doubt that it is the Creator who has the first and last word. Perhaps our Creator knows more about life than that it is futile from the ground up. His first word was the deed of creation and the declaration that it was all good. His last word was to send his Son Jesus Christ and his victory over death. Life is destined to become eternal life. But this is not something that we learn from the book of Ecclesiastes. For this we have to turn to the gospel brought to us by the apostles.

Issues

Turkey: under the shadow of religious intolerance

Otmar Oehring,

A shadow still hangs over Turkey's non-Muslim religious minorities, following the brutal murder in April of three Protestants in the eastern town of Malatya. The murders have not so far produced any serious effort by the state to tackle the underlying causes of the murders. No effort has been made to tackle the xenophobia and hostility to religious minorities, which Turkish Protestants are convinced is a major factor in the murders. This official Turkish indifference looks bad to the outside world, notably to the European Union (EU).

Indeed, the situation for religious minorities is getting worse. Threats by telephone and in writing against churches, religious minority (eg. Armenian Apostolic) schools and individuals are mounting. Ethnic minorities – especially the Kurds – are also seeing rising numbers of threats. Public discussion is increasing over who should have the right to live in Turkey. Should the country only be the home of ethnic Turks?

Whenever there is a bomb attack, journalists focus on the place of origin of the suspects. When Istanbul airport became a target for bombers, journalists eagerly pointed out that the suspects came from the Lazistan region close to the border with Georgia. The suggestion is that they were not real Turks.

A wider range of religious minority individuals and institutions – including Catholic and Protestant churches and their clergy – are now being directly threatened with physical attacks. In February 2006, Catholic priest Fr Andrea Santoro was murdered in his church in the Black Sea port of Trabzon.

Then in April this year came the murder of the three Protestants in Malatya – two Turkish Christians, Necati Aydin and Ugur Yuksel, as well as a German, Tilmann Geske. The publishing house, Zirve, where the three Protestants were found, had been the target of protests in 2005, demanding that it be closed down as its activities were “proselytism” of Muslims. But as Turkish Protestants have pointed out, the Criminal Code has been changed to allow the sharing of beliefs if there are no demonstrable political motives.

However, as Ertugrul Ozkok, editorial writer for Turkey's largest newspaper, *Hurriyet* wrote the day after the murders: “While only a handful of actual murderers is involved, there are many, many assistants.” Ozkok described the many newspapers who publish intolerant articles about Christians and the politicians who make such statements as “agents of provocation”.

These politicians include government ministers, such as Minister of State Mehmet Aydin, who controls the government's Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet). On March 27, 2007, he charged that “the goal of missionary activity is to break up the historical, religious, national and cultural unity of the people of Turkey.” Schools are also a source of what EU officials have described to Forum 18 as “massive nationalistic indoctrination”.

Politicians repeatedly speak of “missionaries” (usually Christian) as a threat to the country and a danger to its people. In a live program on NTV in May 2006, Professor Ali Bardakoglu, who heads the Presidency of Religious Affairs, declared: “We are not only telling our people in Turkey that Islam is the right (only) religion, but we also inform them about missionaries' activities threatening our people.” The state-sanctioned mufti in the eastern town of Erzincan held a panel discussion on missionary activity, Satanism and “dangerous and destructive

activity”. In November 2006, one deputy Muharrem Kilic warned Parliament about missionaries who have “attacked the Turkish people”.

Even when reporting attacks on religious minorities, media coverage is often hostile to the victims and their communities. Such coverage could be seen as excusing the attacks, or at the very least sympathizing with the motives behind them.

Most recently, two Georgian Orthodox priests from neighbouring Georgia were visiting Borcka in late spring in the remote north-east, close to the border with Georgia, as part of a tourist group. Although in civilian clothes, they were wearing crosses. Recognized as priests, they were set upon by three local men in a brutal attack. Turkey's coastal area in the north-east is known for its fierce nationalism and xenophobia, routinely stoked by the local press. Journalists regularly stir up fears over Georgians seeking out fellow ethnic Georgians in local villages by asking if visiting Georgians have come on missionary trips.

In this region, any non-locals attract hostile questions about what they are doing. Questions are asked about whether they are ordinary missionaries with a hidden agenda. Minister of State Aydin, quoted above, made the often repeated claim that “a significant part of missionary activity is done in secret.”

The local ethnic Georgian and Laz minorities have long been converted to Islam. Although they are now less wary of revealing their Georgian roots, no one would dare to openly admit that their people were originally Christian. Turkish intellectuals and some media are prepared to accept that they are ethnic minorities, but almost no one is prepared to accept that they can be anything other than Sunni Muslims.

Certain individuals and institutions have always been a target of attacks, most notably the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul, the residence of the most senior patriarch in the worldwide Orthodox Christian community. For years it has been threatened with attack, and it can be highly dangerous for Patriarch Bartholomew or other senior bishops to walk the streets of the city. The Armenian Patriarch Mesrop – the leader of Turkey's largest Christian community – is also under threat and is not as well protected as the Ecumenical Patriarch.

Police officers assigned to protect religious minority leaders in the wake of the murder of Fr Santoro are often unarmed. When in February 2007 Patriarch Mesrop publicly pointed out the lack of security, the state authorities told him he should hire a guard from a private security company, which he has now done.

Religious minorities fear being “protected” by the police, an institution known as a hotbed of nationalism. Such minorities sometimes ask whether it is wise to be protected by their enemies.

Turkey's National Intelligence Organisation (MIT) secret police had a flat facing the Trabzon church where Fr Santoro was murdered. Presumably, MIT has similar observation points close to other minority places of worship. Are such observation points to protect the minorities or to control them, as religious minorities argue privately? MIT officers also frequently turn up at places of worship unannounced. When challenged, they do not deny they are from the security apparatus but insist they are there to observe and check up on security measures. Some minority places of worship have asked such MIT officers to leave.

Some MIT officers do believe in protecting reli-

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Preventing caregiver burnout

Lisa M. Petsche

Family members and other informal (unpaid) caregivers provide practical assistance and enhance the quality of life for ill older people who might otherwise require placement in a long-term care residence. Typically, they are spouses or offspring, many seniors themselves.

The help they provide ranges from chauffeuring, shopping, running errands and paying bills to grounds keeping, housekeeping, preparing meals, managing medication, assisting with personal care (bathing, dressing, grooming and toileting) and assisting with mobility (ambulation, transferring from one location to another and changing position in bed). Needs usually increase over time.

Other typical caregiver responsibilities include co-ordinating care and advocating for the ill person's needs. If their relative is cognitively impaired, they may also provide supervision to ensure safety. In addition, caregivers provide companionship and emotional support.

Although it has its rewards, the caregiving role can be physically, psychologically, emotionally and financially demanding. This often heavy load is exacerbated by the limited availability of community support services.

The caregiving journey is particularly challenging when it continues over a long period of time, and when the elder has complex needs, a demanding personality or mental impairment. A variety of emotions may be experienced along the way, including sadness, grief, frustration, anger, resentment, guilt, anxiety and loneliness.

While a certain degree of stress is inevitable, when left unchecked it can lead to burnout, a serious matter. It's important to watch for the following physical warning signs: chronic fatigue, sleep difficulties, significant weight loss or gain, frequent illness and development of chronic health problems. Memory problems are also common, as is social isolation.

Emotional red flags include frequent crying; frequent irritation by small annoyances; difficulty controlling one's temper; feeling overwhelmed; feeling inadequate; feeling alone; and feeling hopeless. In severe cases, burnout can lead to abuse of the care receiver; this signals the need for immediate help.

If you are a caregiver, consider these strategies for keeping stress manageable and preventing burnout.

♦ Accept the reality of your relative's illness. There is nothing you can do to stop it.

♦ Learn as much as possible about the illness and its management, and educate family and friends to help them understand.

♦ Pick your battles; don't make a major issue out of every concern.

♦ Use positive self-talk. Emphasize phrases such as “I can,” “I will” and “I choose.”

♦ Nurture your spirit. Do things that bring inner peace, such as praying, reading something uplifting, writing in a journal or listening to music.

♦ Create a relaxation room or corner in your home – a tranquil spot you can retreat to in order to rejuvenate.

♦ Develop a calming ritual to help you unwind at the end of the day. Avoid watching the news before going to bed.

♦ Look after your health: eat nutritious meals, get adequate rest, exercise and see your family doctor regularly.

♦ Stay connected to your friends, church and any other groups to which you belong. Minimize contact with negative people.

♦ Simplify your life. Set priorities and don't waste time or energy on unimportant things. If finances permit, hire a housecleaning service or a personal support worker or companion for your relative, to free up some of your time and energy.

♦ Be flexible about plans and expectations. Recognize that there will be good days and bad days, and what you can give may vary from day to day. Take things one day at a time.

♦ Give yourself permission to feel all the emotions that surface, including resentment and frustration. Remind yourself that you are doing your best and are only human.

♦ Don't keep problems to yourself – seek support from a family member, friend or counsellor. Join a community caregiver support group (some offer concurrent care), or an Internet group if it's hard to get out.

Accept offers of help. Ask other family members to share the load. Be specific about the kind of help you need. Get information about community support services – including respite care options – and take full advantage of them.

♦ Don't promise your relative you will never place him or her in a long-term care residence, because you don't know what the future holds.

Lisa M. Petsche is a clinical social worker and a freelance writer specializing in family life and eldercare.

Story

Organist... continued from page 6

and re-installed the parts, cleaned and polished the wood, till one night, already in my pajamas, I inserted the last screw. At last it was all finished and the moment had arrived! Although it was rather late at night, I couldn't wait. Switching the motor on, I pulled some stops and put my fingers on a cord. But there was dead silence. Although the motor was running rather noisily, there was no music.

What now? What was wrong? Where did I goof up in replacing all those parts?

By now it was late at night, so I decided to go to bed. I'd solve the problem tomorrow. I turned off the light and crawled into bed. As I turned over, something suddenly and painfully stabbed my left side.

Turning on the light and clutching my chest, I felt a lump in my pajama pocket. Lo and behold, I fished out a large screw.

Immediately I realized that screw would solve my problem of the organ not responding as it should. This screw belonged the organ's wind chest and because it was in my pajama pocket and not where it should be, the air would not stay in the wind chest so no air would flow into the organ pipes.

I couldn't wait until morning. I got up and opened up the organ works again and installed the small but very important component. That did not take very long but what now? It should be working now – but would it?

By now it was after midnight, my friend Chris not here, so I wouldn't bother him, but what about Miss Villiers? Would I wake her and face her wrath?

Yet, I could not resist the temptation. Switching on the motor, I pulled a few very soft stops and put my fingers on the keyboard and – IT WORKED!

I felt like Mr. Knipscheer, sitting behind a great console and playing a great big pipe organ! In my happiness and joy, I became a little too enthused and pulled a few more stops. Suddenly the door opened and a white ghostly figure entered the room. Miss Villiers in long night attire, complete with nightcap.

Here I had an old Baptist lady in night clothes in my bedroom. I expected her to be very upset and bawl me out, as she sometimes did, but instead she exclaimed, "O, this is so nice, this sounds so good! Play some more!" And she sank down on my couch to listen some more.

Some years ago Chris, my best friend and my best man on my wedding went to be with the Lord. But some years before that we went back to New Zealand and had a great time with him and his wife Alyson. We reminiscent about our good old days in Dunedin, but I don't think he ever really believed my story about my first "concert" on my two-manual organ with Miss Villiers in attendance with nightgown and cap.

"But Miss Villiers always said you

were an unbeliever, Chris." he'd reply "because you smoked." I was still in faraway New Zealand on my parents 25th Wedding Anniversary. Since I could not be there, I decided to send them a unique greeting. We recorded a message and our congratulations on a 12-inch wax record, and I finished by playing "Our God and Help in ages passed" on my newly built organ. When the recording arrived in Holland, I think every member of the immediate family, all my uncles and aunts, and even the neighbors heard the record or heard about it.

"This is our Reijer playing the organ," mom would declare proudly. The wax recording proved to my mother that I had become a good Organist.

"Hello, Mr. Knipscheer, against all odds and your forebodings, my son is an Organist!"

A couple of years after immigrating, Mies and I decided to get married – in December of 1953. The organ came in very handy. Since our 'flat' had a very large living room, the organ served as a fine divider between the living area and the bedroom. Sometime after our wedding on Dec. 23, 1953 at Knox Presbyterian Church, after a Sunday morning Worship Service I walked to the front of the Church where the church organist, Mr. Roy Spackman was just wrapping up. The church had a great big pipe organ and a fantastic console with three manuals and an enormous amount of stops and gadgets. To me, the owner of a two-manual harmonium, it was rather overwhelming just to look at. As I feasted my eyes on the scene, Mr. Spackman, who was affectionately known in his congregation as 'Spacky', looked up and smiled.

"You look bewildered," he said. This was an understatement. He did recognize me, as he had played the organ at our wedding.

"Do you play?" he asked.

"No", I said. "I just play an old pedal organ."

"Well," came the answer, "This is just the same. You play the harmonium, you can play this organ!"

Oh sure, look at my little squeeze box and look at this monster. No way, Jose!

Mr. Spackman then explained that he was sometimes badly in need of a substitute but that there were so few able to play a pipe organ. Well, I am one of those.

But then followed an offer that changed my reluctance: "How about I give you a key of the church and a key of the organ



and you can practice?"

"But what about all these foot pedals?" I asked.

"Nothing to it!" said the professional organist. "I'll give you a few lessons and you'll be on your way."

Well, wasn't that something! In the early days of my musical career I got kicked off the organ bench, and now here was a guy that begged me to come and sit down.

A bit shakily I took him up on his offer, and during the following few weeks Spacky introduced me to the pedals of the great organ. Since I worked near to the church, I sometimes dropped in for a quick practice and to play a few hymns or short pieces on the magnificent instrument. What a thrill!

"Mother, you should see your son now!" I thought. "And tell Mr. Knipscheer."

I am drafted again

About four or five weeks later on a Thursday evening, somebody knocked on the door of our home at Garfield Ave. To my surprise it was the Rev. Ian Matheson, pastor of Knox Church. He had a message for me. While in Wellington judging a choir competition, Mr. Spackman had had a heart attack and was fortunately recuperating in a hospital in Wellington. The person designated to play in case of an emergency was also out of town and since I was in town, I was 'it'.

I was what? I was to play this Sunday for the worship service at Knox Presbyterian Church.

The Pastor left me with the ever reassuring New Zealand expression, "You'll be alright, mate."

The following day, right after work I went to the church for some practice, but knowing what was ahead for me, I did

not do too well. And the scary thoughts and forebodings remained with me. I practiced the hymns for that Sunday and returned the following Saturday morning, practiced and practiced, went across the street for lunch, and then practiced some more and some more. But I came home more nervous than before – and I had a big blister on my bum from sliding across that organ bench.

Evening passed to make way for the night, and slowly the night gave away to a new morning – Sunday Morning, and we had

to go to church, to that big church with that very big organ, with it's many stops and with that very large pedal board – and I had to play!

I remember sliding onto the organ bench and drying my hands with my handkerchief. I should have brought a towel. For the beginning of the service, I had chosen and practiced a simple and well-known hymn with very soft stops, and suddenly during this prelude, I seemed to lose that scary feeling. I managed to find another beautiful stop and repeated the hymn several times with yet another stop. I even dared to fantasize a bit on the melody. Most of the hymns during the service were well known to me and the congregation, and, barring a few small boobies, I thought I didn't do too badly.

This was confirmed to me by my employer, Eric Hill, a man known not to pass on compliments very easily. After the service, he tapped me on the shoulder and said, "Not bad – no, not bad." Than I knew I did alright. Hear that, Mr. Knipscheer?

After that I was privileged to sit on that bench many times and play that great instrument at Knox Presbyterian Church, George Street, Dunedin, New Zealand. However, it was good to see Mr. Spackman return to his rightful place completely recovered from his heart attack. Thank you, Spacky, for the opportunity you gave me. I will never play like you but I learned a lot and my love for the pipe organ will be for ever.

Challenges

Turkey...continued from p. 15

gious minorities, but others are staunch nationalists and signed-up members of the "deep state", the nationalist circles in state bodies which regard themselves as the custodians of the Atatürkist legacy. Such nationalists are unlikely to offer genuine protection. Even with such MIT observation there is no full protection, as the murder of Fr Santoro demonstrated, so many doubt the value of such observation. Indeed, when a grenade was thrown into the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul in 2005, only police and security officials were present outside. Mosques – as well as Cem Houses where Alevi Muslim communities worship – do not have such MIT "protection".

Religious minorities need real protection because of growing nationalist hostility and growing threats. But for religious minorities, this is a dilemma as the "protection" the state offers is equally bound up with control.

The Turkish authorities have not taken effective steps to either protect non-Muslim minorities or address the mass media and education system's intolerance of them. As the example of Ertugrul Ozkok of *Hurriyet* shows, there are some Turkish voices from outside the minorities calling for the intolerance to be tackled.

But religious minorities to whom Forum 18 has spoken to do not think that the elections will bring to power any political party willing to tackle the dangerous media intolerance of religious minorities, or to take the dramatic changes necessary to usher in genuine religious freedom.

No legal improvements are likely.

Turkey's application to join the EU has stalled and the prospect of Turkey's entry seems as far away as ever. Tentative progress to improve human rights and religious freedom has ground to a halt. Even on minor issues to help religious minorities, where the Turkish authorities promised to make progress several years ago, nothing has happened.

Indeed, it is becoming increasingly clear that fundamental reform of the Turkish Constitution, not of individual laws or legal problems, is essential for genuine progress. So it is not surprising that minorities are increasingly turning to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in Strasbourg, not the Turkish authorities, to protect their fundamental right to freedom of thought, conscience and belief.

The Catholic Church was specifically promised that at least some of the problems it faces would be resolved, when members of the Bishops' Conference met Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan in 2005. During Pope Benedict's high-profile visit at the end of 2006, Turkish officials agreed to establish joint working groups to resolve the difficulties over legal status and property. But nothing has happened, despite public prodding by the Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone.

The European Court ECHR issued a crucial judgment in January 2007 in favour of a Greek Orthodox community foundation (Fener Rum Erkek Lisesi Vakfi) running a High School in Istanbul's Fener area. In what is a common occurrence, the government had confiscated a building, but the Strasbourg court upheld the community foundation's rights and punished the Turkish government with a large fine.

In earlier cases the state has simply paid the fine and taken no action to change the legal situation to avoid similar violations from happening in other cases, or to make restitution to those whose rights have already been wronged. This signals to those who encourage intolerance that the rights of people who belong to Turkey's religious minorities do not really matter.

Intolerance of religious minorities is growing within Turkish society, and – just as with the legal protection of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and belief – Turkey's main political parties and state institutions show no interest in effectively dealing with the root causes. Indeed, some within the state are encouraging this intolerance. I

Continuing the discussion

The Christian Reformed denomination has debated the role of women in the life of the church for the last sixty years. Discussion began in 1947 when women members of some congregations asked to participate in congregational meetings and some consistories responded affirmatively to those requests. Synod 1947 appointed a committee to study this matter. At issue were the nature of congregational meetings and the interpretation of a number of biblical texts – e.g. 1 Corinthians 11 & 1 Timothy 2. Synod studied this matter for ten years and in 1957, when the denomination celebrated its 100th anniversary, decided that "women may participate in congregational meetings with the right to vote subject to the rules that govern the participation of men. The question as to whether and when the women members of any church shall be invited to participate in the activities of its congregational meetings is left to the judgment of each consistory" (*Acts of Synod 1957*, p. 90). One classis protested this decision to Synod 1958, but its protest was not sustained. The synodical debate was over, but discussion continued as councils decided how they would implement synod's decision.

Discussion began again in 1970. At issue were the nature of the offices of the church and the interpretation of the same biblical texts considered from 1947-1957. Synod studied this matter for thirty-seven years and in 2007, when the denomination celebrated its 150th anniversary, removed the word *male* from the Church Order without adding any restrictions that curtail, on the synodical level at least, the privileges and responsibilities of those elected to church office. It's not likely that Synod 2008 will receive a protest to the 2007 decision. If one is received, it's not likely that synod will sustain it. The synodical debate is over, but discussion will continue as councils and classes decide how they will implement synod's decisions.

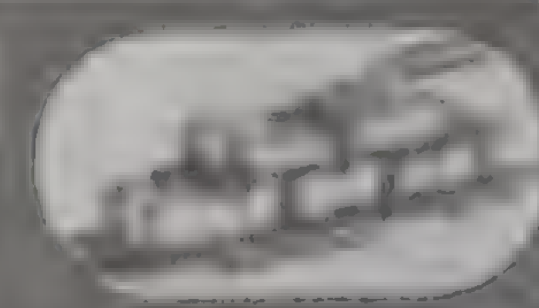
Though many in the church are weary of discussion about the role of women and urge the church to "get on with ministry," it's impossible to do ministry pretending that the role of our women members has no significance to women or to the health of our congregations. It's also impossible to do ministry as if our sixty years of discussion have no relevance as to how we live together. There are a number of challenges facing all of us.

1. At Synod 2007 members who disagreed with each other modeled respect for each other and concern for the unity of the church. One can only hope that congregations and classes will strive to conduct their meetings and ministries in the same spirit.
2. Over the past sixty years the church has come to a greater appreciation of how the gifts of women have blessed congregations and advanced God's kingdom. As women were continually denied privileges and responsibilities enjoyed by their male counterparts, some suggested that all women should resign from service to their local congregations for a year. How that would have crippled the ministry of all our congregations! We have long appreciated and utilized the gifts of our women members.

Increasingly, we have recognized the broader scope of women's gifts as our women members have contributed significantly in congregational meetings, in the diaconate and consistory, in the pulpit and in other areas of ministries. For years we confessed, in the words of the Heidelberg Catechism, "that believers one and all as members of [the church] share in Christ and in all his treasures and gifts...and that each member should consider it a duty to use these gifts readily and cheerfully for the service and enrichment of the other members." The removal of

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Vicky Van Andel Ed.



the word *male* from the Church Order opens new ways of living out that confession. But for synod's decision to have an effect on our life together we must ask how we are going to incorporate our women members into our hearts and our assemblies. Who is going to advocate for them? I am intrigued by the fact that the majority of our women members do not advocate for themselves. They do not want to be labeled "pushy," and they hold back more than they should, depriving congregations of competent leadership as they remain outside the council room and depriving our denomination of desperately needed pastors as they find homes in other denominations that are more welcoming.

One of the characteristics of the Savior who gifted the church when he ascended was hospitality, an affirmation of the gifts of all and a welcome to all to use their talents and abilities in his Father's kingdom. No wonder our ordination form calls both elders and deacons to be hospitable! Current church leaders should be in the forefront of those calling women and men to use their gifts in the service of Christ. The needs are great! For example, the May and June denominational prayer guides asked us to pray for more pastors. Each year fifty-five are retiring and each year Home Missions is attempting to plant twenty-five new churches. One of the ways God is answering our prayers is by calling women to the Gospel ministry. Is there a place in our hearts and congregations for these pastors? Is there a place in our hearts and congregations for women deacons and elders to serve alongside their male counterparts? Are we able to walk hand in hand even though we may not see eye to eye on this issue? Is there enough space under our congregation's umbrella that together we are able to serve the God we all love?

3. Over the years our discussion of these matters has alienated people from each other, dividing churches, communities and even families. "See how they love each other," exclaimed unbelievers who were attracted to the early church. Our love for each other has been much more difficult to see, and our proclamation that "Christ is the answer" has been tarnished. We need to work hard at the work of reconciliation.
4. Sometime in the future we also need to revisit the office of deacon, another of the casualties of our long and tortuous discussions. Though Church Order Article 2 says that all the offices of the church "differ from each other only in mandate and task, not in dignity and honor," we have found that difficult to embrace. We have long considered the office of deacon of lesser importance, one in which people must serve before they "graduate" to the more important office of elder. Unfortunately, over the past years we have increased that perception by intentionally stripping the office of its "authority" and viewing it only as one of "service." A future synod needs to appoint a committee to restudy this matter in an attempt to restore the "dignity and honor" of this office, recognizing, too, that our deacons serve with the authority of Christ.

Many breathed a sigh of relief because Synod 2007 finally removed the word *male* from the Church Order, thus ending our long debate. On paper, at least, our women members are invited to participate in the church alongside our male members. The words on paper must now become reality in our hearts and lives. That will take more discussion and some very specific actions of welcome.

Vicky Van Andel is the editor of this column. Anyone who would like to contribute to this column is invited to contact her via e-mail at: vickyv@telus.net

fear that this will have increasingly dangerous consequences for Turkey's religious minorities, and for freedom of thought, conscience and belief for all Turkish citizens.

Dr Otmar Oehring, head of the human rights office of Missio, a Catholic charity based in Germany. This is an edited version of an article that first appeared in the Forum 18 News Service <http://www.forum18.org/>

Reflections



Welcome to my perch
Bert Witvoet

God provided an eldest son

Phineas M. Khayhadhi is a 48-year-old Senior Manager at Telkom, an ICT Service provider in South Africa and the biggest in Africa. He paid us a visit at Hengel Paradise near Louis Trichard in the Limpopo province of South Africa. By "we" I mean Marc and Dora Strooboscher, Ike and Jennie Witteveen, and Alice and myself. We were on a Worldwide Christian School mission during April of this year, and at night you could find us at our cabins on the shore of a small man-made lake in the midst of a banana and guava plantation. Phineas had come to discuss a possible affiliation of Life Sewing School with the Theocentric Association of Christian Education (TACE). The leader of TACE, principal Wilson Mandende, was also present. Mr. Mandende and Phineas sought our input.

But before we got started on the actual affiliation talks, Phineas told us a story that still fills me with wonder.

A vision

Some nine years ago, when Phineas was working for Telkom as manager in Lous Trichardt, his secretary told him that an old man had come to see him, but that he had not made an appointment. Phineas told her that old people in the Venda culture do not know the protocol of appointments and that she should let him in. She did.

When the old man, who introduced himself as a pastor Muturiki stationed at Nzhelele, entered, and Phineas and he had exchanged proper greetings, he fixed his eye on Phineas and told him that he had had a vision and that in his vision God had told him to see Phineas. Neither one of them knew each other. But the pastor was sure that it was Phineas he had to talk to. Not only that, but his message to Phineas was that the latter should become his eldest son. The pastor had a son and three daughters, all younger than Phineas, but he needed Phineas to carry out the duties of an eldest son. (In African society these things are not unheard of. Families can be added to when needed. Families are flexible. In fact, I was referred to a few times as "uncle" by people I did not know.) The pastor had an accommodation business which he wanted Phineas to assist in managing, and he wanted Phineas to help look after his family. Phineas was so struck by the compelling and unusual request that he broke down in tears. He agreed to follow the direction of the old pastor's vision.

He took over the pastor's business, which had been neglected because the pastor had been too preoccupied with his pastoral work. Pretty soon the business turned around and made a profit. The old man never monitored his work because he completely trusted Phineas. The latter also became an integral part of the family. The first- and second-born children, who were away studying at university, and the young ones fully accepted him



Dora Strooboscher in conversation with Phineas Khavhadhi.

as their elder brother. Both older children were brilliant students, according to Phineas, and the success of the business was able to finance their studies.

Urgent call

One day, in February 1999, which is summer in South Africa, Phineas was at work and received an urgent call from the pastor's wife. He had to come home immediately, which was 55 kilometers away. Phineas rushed home, and was told that the old man had just passed away. The pastor's wife handed Phineas a note. Just before he slipped away, the pastor had asked for a sheet of paper and a pen. On the paper he wrote: "Don't worry about me. Phineas will take care of you." The note was meant for his wife and children. Phineas broke down and cried. He had come to love the pastor and his family, and this news was hard on him. Also he felt very honoured. He was the only one that had been contacted so far. It was up to him to break the news to the children and to make all the funeral preparations.

The pastor's wife and the two children were devastated by the loss of their husband and father. In fact, after the funeral had taken place and the family had spent time mourning and comforting each other, the children refused to go back to university. They both wanted to give up on their studies. It took a lot of effort on the part of Phineas to persuade them to return. They both did finally, but the son found it hard to apply himself. He started to fail in his studies.

In the meantime, Phineas continued to run the family business, and he drew very close to the pastor's wife. He was her right hand. Together they strategized about the family affairs, which in the meantime also included a private Christian school. The pastor and his wife had felt so much compassion for the poor around them that they had decided to start a daycare. As so often hap-

pens in South Africa, the daycare grew into an elementary school because parents urged the founders to continue. They did not want to send their children to a public school and thus have them miss out on the loving Christian care they had experienced in daycare.

Second call

A year later to the day, after Phineas had gotten that sad phone call from the housemaid, he was at work and again received another urgent message by phone. "Come home immediately. You are needed."

Phineas rushed home and received the shocking news that the pastor's wife had just passed away. He was handed a note, written this time by the pastor's wife before she died. It read: "Don't worry about me. Phineas will take care of you." Phineas was heartbroken. Again a loved one had departed, and again it fell to him to tell the children. It was a sad, sad homecoming for the children. They had lost another parent. Both parents had been very dear to them.

This time, a deep depression hit the children. They felt their life had lost all meaning. They could not bring themselves to return to university. Again Phineas used all the powers of persuasion he could muster. "Your parents want you to go back to school." He eventually succeeded in having the daughter return to her studies in medicine. But he could not reach the son. The son would not even talk to him or anyone else. He shut himself up in his room. Phineas had to give up because he had to return to his work in Pretoria, where he was now stationed since his promotion in the company.

Second chance

But he kept coming back to the family home to see how the son was doing. One day, he told the son that he was going to take him along to live with him in Pretoria. This



A neighbourhood woman and/or parent cooks the warm lunch on the floor of an empty classroom. She gets paid for this service.



The Day Care facility that was the beginning of Life Sewing School is half a kilometer away from the school. We observed 60 pre-school children sitting neatly on the floor of one classroom, eating a warm lunch that was cooked on the floor of another classroom. The lunch consisted of milipap (corn porridge) and chicken. The children, ranging between the ages of two to four years, waited patiently until everybody had been served, then they said a prayer together, and only then did they start to eat. We as visitors were amazed at their submissive behaviour.

Classifieds



Learners at Life Sewing School in Nzhelele sing the national anthem, which is a hybrid song combining new English lyrics with extracts of the hymn "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika" and the old South African anthem "Die Stem van Suid-Afrika". It is the only neo-modal national anthem in the world, by virtue of being the only one that starts in one key and finishes in another. The lyrics employ the five most populous of South Africa's eleven official languages – Xhosa (first stanza, first two lines), Zulu (first stanza, last two lines), Sesotho (second stanza), Afrikaans (third stanza) and English (final stanza). Readers can listen to the South African National Anthem by going to the following website: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1pV>

time the son listened and agreed. He moved in with Phineas.

In the meantime, the son had lost his standing at the university. He was not allowed to re-enroll. He had lost his credibility as a student. So Phineas went straight to the Dean of the faculty of Engineering at the University of Pretoria and asked for an interview with the President. When he met with the President, he told him the whole story of how the old pastor had come to him and how he had been taken into the family, and how both parents had died a year apart. He explained that these sad events had caused the son to fail in his studies. The President was moved to tears by the story and immediately set in motion a process to readmit the young man. The son did go back to school and managed to successfully complete his studies. He ended up getting a good job as an engineer. In the meantime, the daughter completed her studies in medicine and has entered upon a further course of studies so she can become a specialist.

God's care

All of us Canadian educators were deeply moved by Phineas' story. It was a story of faith, love and great sadness. Yet God had so clearly provided for this family. Both Phineas and the two children are the directors of the Christian School called Life Sewing, because they had promised their parents to continue what their parents had probably considered their most important mission in life: that of providing Christian

schooling in a town called Nzhelele, north of the Soutpansberg Mountains. As a team we eventually visited that school with its lively staff and 90 children. We also saw the daycare facility half a kilometer down the road with some 60 youngsters having a *miliepap* lunch with chicken.

We understood the reason why the directors of the school want to affiliate with TACE. They want to turn the school into an association school rather than a private school and they seek assistance from the association. All three, Phineas and the children, live too far from the school to be able to give proper direction and support to Life Sewing. Also, they are too much caught up in their various professions. Yet they want to honour the promise made to their parents. The best way of doing that, they felt, was surrendering ownership so that the school can continue as a parentally controlled institution under the guiding hand of TACE.

It hardly needs saying that we felt honoured by having been consulted in the process. Our hearts went out to these three people and their school. We ended the evening with prayer that God would take care of all.



Bert Witvoet is the former editor of CC, now retired, who stays active by editing the Christian Educators Journal and preaching the occasional sermon



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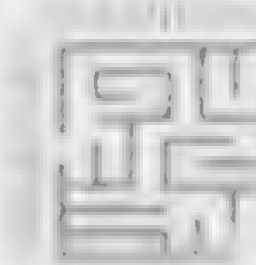
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1947 August 14 2007

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With thankfulness and praise to God we announce the **60th Anniversary** of our parents, grandparents & great-grandparents

With much love from all of us

John & Grace Pasma, *Edmonton, Alberta*
Joanne & Bill Den Harder, *Lyons, Ontario*
Jake & Marjorie Pasma, *Mossley, Ontario*
Keith & Judy Pasma, *London, Ontario*
Ben & Lynda Pasma, *St. Thomas, Ontario*
Margaret & Wilf Greidanus, *Airdrie, Alberta*
Tim & Joanne Pasma, *London, Ontario*
Grandchildren and great-grandchildren

To celebrate this special occasion friends are invited to an **Open House** on Saturday, August 18, 2007 from 2-4 p.m. in the Bethel Christian Reformed Church, 716 Classic Drive, London, Ontario
We invite all family members and relatives to celebrate with us till 6 p.m.
Best wishes only

Correspondence: George and Alice Pasma
263 Clarke Road
London ON N5W 5E7

1957 August 17 2007

JOHN AND ANKY SUK (Rozendal)

along with their children and grandchildren:

Ethel & Hans Branderhorst, *Jordan Station, ON*
Ralph & Melanie Suk, *Martin, MI*
Mark & Melanie Suk - Isaac;
Tiffany & Casey Houseman - Madalyn;
Travis; Darin
Marlene & Martin Boardman, *Waterdown, ON*
Ellery, Lauranne
Sandra & Henry VanMarion, *Niag-on-the-Lake, ON*
Emily, Grace, Nathan
Donna & Bernie Pot, *Hamilton, ON*
Abigail

We give thanks to God for **50 Years of Marriage**. Together we will celebrate, D.V. on Sat. Aug 18, 2007 with an **Open House** at Beacon Elementary Christian School, 300 Scott Street, St Catharines, Ontario from 2 - 4 p.m.

Home address: 15 Sharon St
St Catharines ON L2N 3J3

August 2, 1957 - 2007

Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labour in vain. Psalm 127:1a

With joy and thanksgiving to our faithful Lord and Savior

LEO AND JANE VEENSTRA

are very grateful to God for the privilege of celebrating **50 Years of Marriage**. He has truly been our strength and shield, our ever present helper

Joining in this happy celebration are their children:

Sally & Jake Roorda, *Kitchener, ON*
Jane & John Huizinga, *Hamilton, ON*
Dave & Christine Veenstra, *Sardis, BC*
Brenda & Jeff VanDyk, *Kitchener, ON*
along with 15 grandchildren & 1 great-grandchild.

Home address: 222 Old Country Pl
Kitchener ON N2E 3A4
Home phone: (519) 745-2212

Psalm 127 Unless the Lord builds the house....



1957

August 2

2007

God has truly blessed our parents with **50 years together!**

With joy and thanksgiving we announce the anniversary of our parents and grandparents:

GERALD AND WYNNE VANDEZANDE (nee DeJong)

With love from your children & grandchildren:
Janice Vandezande and Paul Godman
Jonathan Sora and Christian VanLuven
Kristen Sora
Jason Sora
Karen and Steve Vieira
Jessica
Alicia

We are grateful for the blessings of marriage and for the love and support of family, church community and friends.



Gerald and Wynne Vandezande
262 Pitfield Rd.
Agincoort ON M1S 1Y7
jwsora@hotmail.com

With joy and thankfulness to God, we hope to celebrate our parents' **50th Wedding Anniversary**

KLAAS AND MARGARET IJZERMAN (nee Spoelstra)

August 8, 1957 - August 8, 2007

Children:

Aleida, *Oakville, ON*
Anthonie & Sue, *Georgetown, ON*
Janet & Frank, *Kelowna, BC*
Marian, *Dexter, MI*
and 9 grandchildren

Home address: 2134 Haygate Crescent
Mississauga ON L5K 1L5

We are thankful that our parents and grandparents

JOHN AND HELEN CAPPON (nee DeJong)

have been blessed with **50 years of marriage.**

Congratulations and love from:

Ken and Marg Cappon
Derek
Kevin
Jared
Steven Cappon
Dave Cappon

Helen and John Cappon
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Toronto ON M2M 1E8
johnandhelen@rogers.com

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Obituaries

Seaforth, Ont.
5 July 1967

Owen Sound, Ont.
21 June 2007

Psalm 119:81

My soul faints with longing for your salvation, but I have put my hope in your word.

DEBORA COREEN (Debbie) DATEMA nee Stryker

The Lord has called home our dear wife, mother, daughter, daughter-in-law, sister, sister-in-law and aunt

Wife of Wayne and mother of Courtney, Kurtis and Brett at home

Daughter of Kurt & Corrie Stryker

Daughter-in-law of Marthinus & Gaye Datema

Sister of Jennifer & Rob Smith, *Mississauga*

Dan & Tanya Stryker, *Owen Sound*

Sister-in-law of Robert Datema, *Toronto*

Judy & Dave Siemon, *Mitchell*

Glena & Erik Nankes, *Blyth*

Donald & Cathy Datema, *Stratford*

and many nieces and nephews

Mailing address: Wayne Datema RR 4
Owen Sound ON N4K 5N6



October 30, 1912, Nieuwerkerk, Zeeland, NL
- July 13, 2007, Norwich, Ontario, CA

HENDRIK JAN SYRIER

Thy Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Psalm 119:105

The Lord in his mercy took home in his 95th year - the beloved husband of the late Marie Syrier (nee Uyl) 1992.

Dear father of:

Peter Syrier (Grace Martin) of *Elmira*

Jane Van Laren (Chris) of *Ariss*

Willie Ryksen (John M.) of *Burgessville*.

Loving Opa of:

Maria Brick (nee Syrier) of *Woodstock*

Hendrik Syrier (Colleen) of *New Dundee*

Walter Van Laren (Glenda) of *Sioux Center, Iowa*

Michelle Vanderwal (Ken) of *Brampton*

Kathryn Luimes (Paul) of *Ridgetown*

Christine Terpstra (Stephen) of *Hamilton*

Michael Ryksen (Joanna) of *Tillsonburg*

Mark Ryksen (Tracy) of *Ingersoll*

Kevin Ryksen (Melissa) of *Norwich*.

Opa is remembered by 25 great-grandchildren. Survived by one brother and two sisters. Predeceased by five sisters and one brother in the Netherlands, and by his granddaughter Brenda (1971).

Henry was a lifetime member of the Christian Reformed Church.

The funeral service was held on

Tuesday, July 17, 2007 at the

Maranatha Christian Reformed Church, 577 Norwich Ave., Woodstock, and was interned in Hillview Cemetery.

Correspondence: Peter Syrier,
354 Arthur Street South
Elmira ON N3B 2P4

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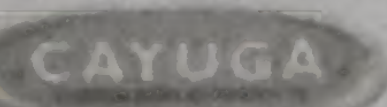
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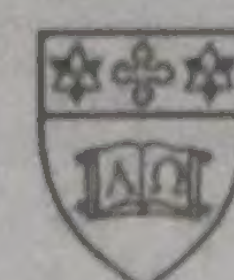
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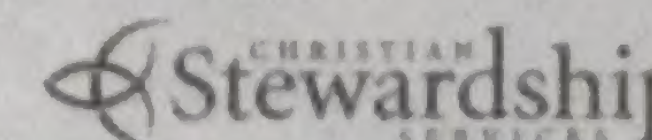
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News

Chocolate wars in West Africa?

Government and rebel forces in Ivory Coast used the cocoa trade to fund war, says a new report.

Blake Lambert

Abidjan, Ivory Coast – First came “blood-diamonds” from Sierra Leone.

Rebels there partnered with former Liberian President Charles Taylor in the 1990s to receive weapons that they used to terrorize the population in exchange for the gems, which were sold globally to unwitting consumers.

Then came “blood timber” from Liberia.

When the UN imposed sanctions on diamond exports from Liberia in 2001 Mr. Taylor – who is now standing trial for crimes against humanity in The Hague – plundered his country’s forests to bankroll his brutal, cross-border wars.

Now another West African conflict is being funded by yet another commodity beloved in the West: chocolate.

Government and rebel leaders of the world’s leading cocoa exporter, Ivory Coast, both siphoned off millions of dollars from the cocoa industry to finance the 2002-03 civil war that divided the once-stable and prosperous country in two, according to a recent report from Global Witness, a London-based group that focuses on resource-fueled corruption.

The government received more than \$58 million from institutions and cocoa revenues, while the rebel New Forces pocketed about \$30 million since 2004 in taxes and revenues, claims the report titled “Hot Chocolate: How Cocoa fuelled the conflict in Côte d’Ivoire.”

Ivory Coast is the world’s leading producer of the commodity, responsible for about 40 percent of global exports, which earned more than \$1 billion in 2006.

Fighting here ended with the government of President Laurent Gbagbo in control of the south, where 90 percent of cocoa production takes place, and the rebel New Forces in charge of the north. The two sides signed a peace agreement in March that put rebel leader Guillaume Soro in the government as prime minister.

Global Witness not only contends the cocoa trade drove the war economy but that the industry still serves the interests of both the government and the rebels who have reaped political and economic benefits with impunity.

Yet loyalists of Mr. Gbagbo’s government reacted to the findings with more bemusement than anger.

“Where did they think we would find the money to make war?” Says Appia Kabran, a vice president in the pro-Gbagbo National Congress for Resistance of Democracy (CNRD).

He says a group that is attacked has to find the money everywhere it is.

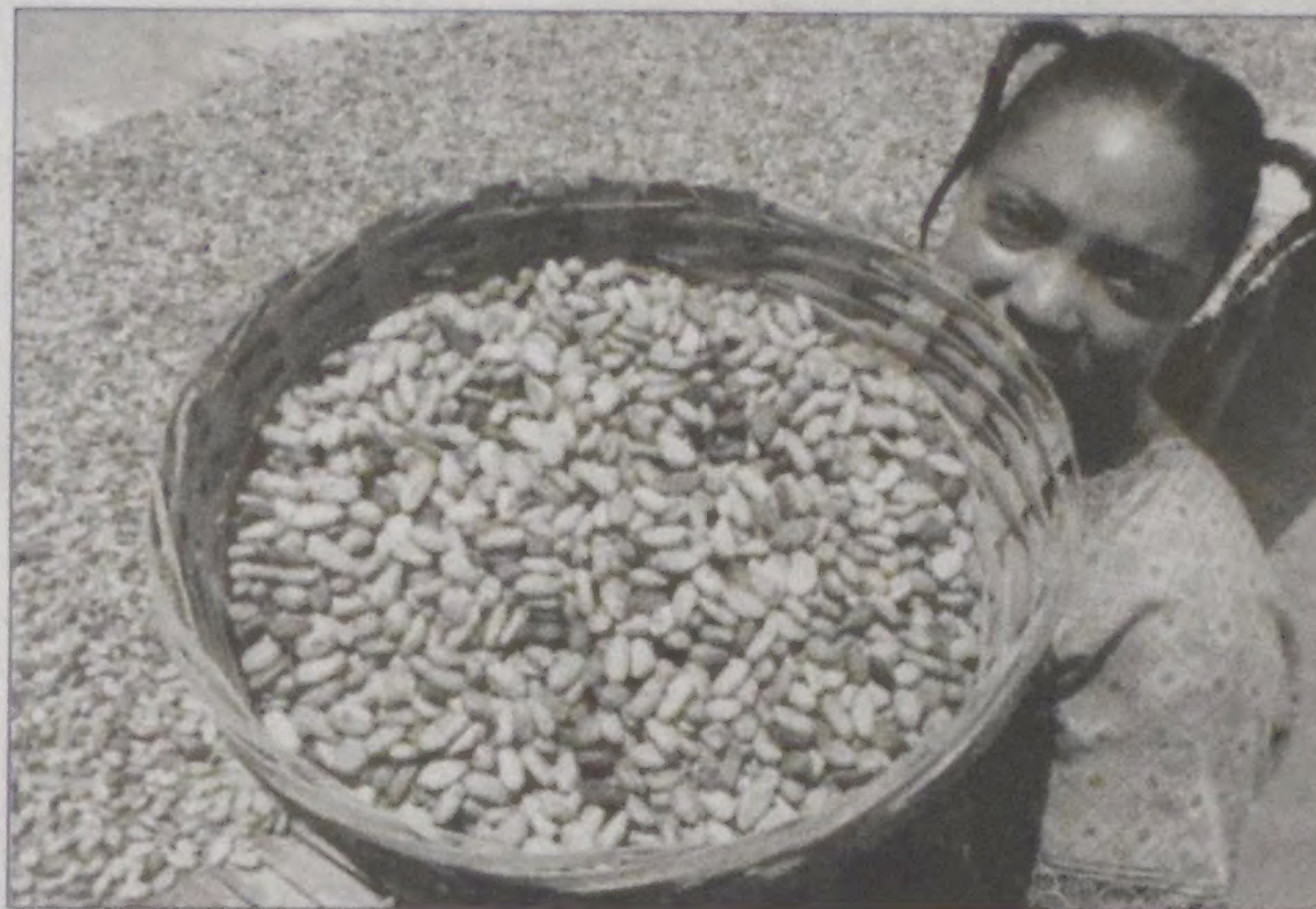
The rebels, meanwhile, deny using cocoa profits to fund their armies.

In his dismissal of the findings, Siratigus Konate, a spokesman for Mr. Soro, points out that the rebels are not in charge of the economy in the cocoa-rich part of Ivory Coast.

“We have nothing to do with the money of the cocoa to finance war or anything like that,” he says.

But over the past decade in West Africa, governments and rebels relied on the money earned from commodities to build their bankroll.

What separates diamonds and timber in Liberia from Ivorian cocoa is that the United Nations Security Council



slapped sanctions on them in order to thwart those who profited from the sales and sustained violent regimes.

And it’s not just cocoa that’s used to fund Ivory Coast’s conflict, says Alphonse Djedje Mady, secretary-general of the opposition Democratic Party of Ivory Coast (PDCI), which ruled the country for nearly four decades until the 1999 military coup.

He says the government and the rebel New Forces used all of the country’s resources, including coffee, cotton, and oil, for the war, adding that the sales of those commodities have never been transparent.

But Mr. Djedje Mady assigns particular blame for the opacity in the cocoa sector to the World Bank for pushing his country to drop price controls in favor of market liberalization, which eventually allowed the Gbagbo government to buy weapons.

His views are deeply partisan, yet the Global Witness report stresses there is a lack of transparency and accountability in the Ivorian cocoa sector.

It calls for the supply of Ivorian cocoa to Western manufacturers to be cleaned up in order to eliminate the possibility of conflict chocolate.

But those good intentions could backfire, warns Daniel Balint-Kurti, an Ivory Coast expert and analyst for the London-based Chatham House.

Cutting Ivorian cocoa out of the global market could harm as many as 3 million to 4 million people who work in the sector, says Mr. Balint-Kurti.

“It would just devastate millions of people’s lives even further and lead to a phenomenal rise in chocolate and cocoa prices worldwide,” he says.

Such a ban, which Balint-Kurti says is unlikely anytime soon, hardly fulfills Djedje Mady’s goal of cocoa production benefiting producers and Ivorians.

He says he yearns for the time when the government, according to him, used its revenues to build roads, hospitals, and schools and to increase workers’ salaries to help boost the lives of its citizens.

Today, Gbagbo’s government gets the commodities, according to Djedje Mady, and then they disappear.

Yet Gbagbo’s loyalists reject any assertions that the president has personally enriched himself through cocoa revenues.

While ordinary Ivorians and Global Witness subscribe to that opinion, Mr. Kabran dismisses it as propaganda.

Kabran even wonders why the idea of “blood” cocoa has been raised now that his country is seeking peace.

“Why don’t they talk about the Iraqi petrol, which is more bloody than the Ivory Coast cocoa?”

News briefs

Recycling pipe organs?

Those churches that have silenced their pipe organs in favor of guitars and drums may have potential buyers in Japan. A Buddhist leader who visited the U.S. fell in love with the sound of the pipe organ. When he returned home his temple north of Tokyo, he had an organ installed with 2000 pipes.

“Pipe organs sound very beautiful and solemn. Therefore, I think that they suit any religion,” said the priest.

Several other Buddhist temples have also embraced the sound of the organ. The article did not say what kind of music was being played on the organs. Bach perhaps?

Wouldn’t that be something: while we clap our hands to the rhythms of rock-n-roll, the Buddhists may be grooving on Bach.

Being green

We often blame our forebears and a worldview that goes back to the 17th century for our abuse of the environment and for the large “carbon footprint” we in the West leave on this earth.

But Alice Thompson reminds us that our parents and many of the next generation as well were very careful in their use of resources. How many of our parents didn’t drum it into us to turn off the lights when you left the room, and who doesn’t recall how cold the house was on a winter morning? Clothes were dried on a clothesline, and few indulged in the extravagance of a daily shower. Although I grew up on the outskirts of Edmonton, my family never owned a car. We took the bus, and this was hardly exceptional.

It’s only rather recently that we’ve begun to think nothing of buying and discarding all sorts of electrical appliances as if they were bic pens. The old dial phones, for example used to last forever. Of the four phones we bought for the office six years ago, only two are still working. And the younger generation chews through cell phones as if they cost nothing in the way of resources.

When I tried to update my old computer, I found it was cheaper to buy a new one. Old fans with ball bearings lasted for years; nowadays you’re lucky if they make it through more than two or three summers. We’re flooded with flimsy products made in China, Thailand, Mexico and poorer parts of the world, consuming resources that can be much better used.

Yet, we’ve been grumbling about this since the 70’s and the wasteful process has only accelerated. We seem to relish this quick turnover of things as much as our grandparents cherished things that lasted and could be handed on to the next generation.

Munch, munch

A new report bemoans the fact that human beings absorb about one quarter of all the plant life on this earth. We are taking more than our fair share of energy out of the ecosystem suggest the researchers. As the population grows and farmlands expand, humans consume more and more of the earth’s biomass. The development of biofuels will probably hasten this process.

This is sure to have bad repercussions on the ecosystems of which we are part, the researchers warn. Gradually, it seems, almost anything humans do to live is regarded as an assault on the earth’s fragile ecosystem. Now even vegetarians have reason to feel guilty. No doubt, soon someone will come up with a way for those with guilty consciences to make recompense for devouring plants just as global travelers can now pay a “fine” for sinning against the atmosphere.